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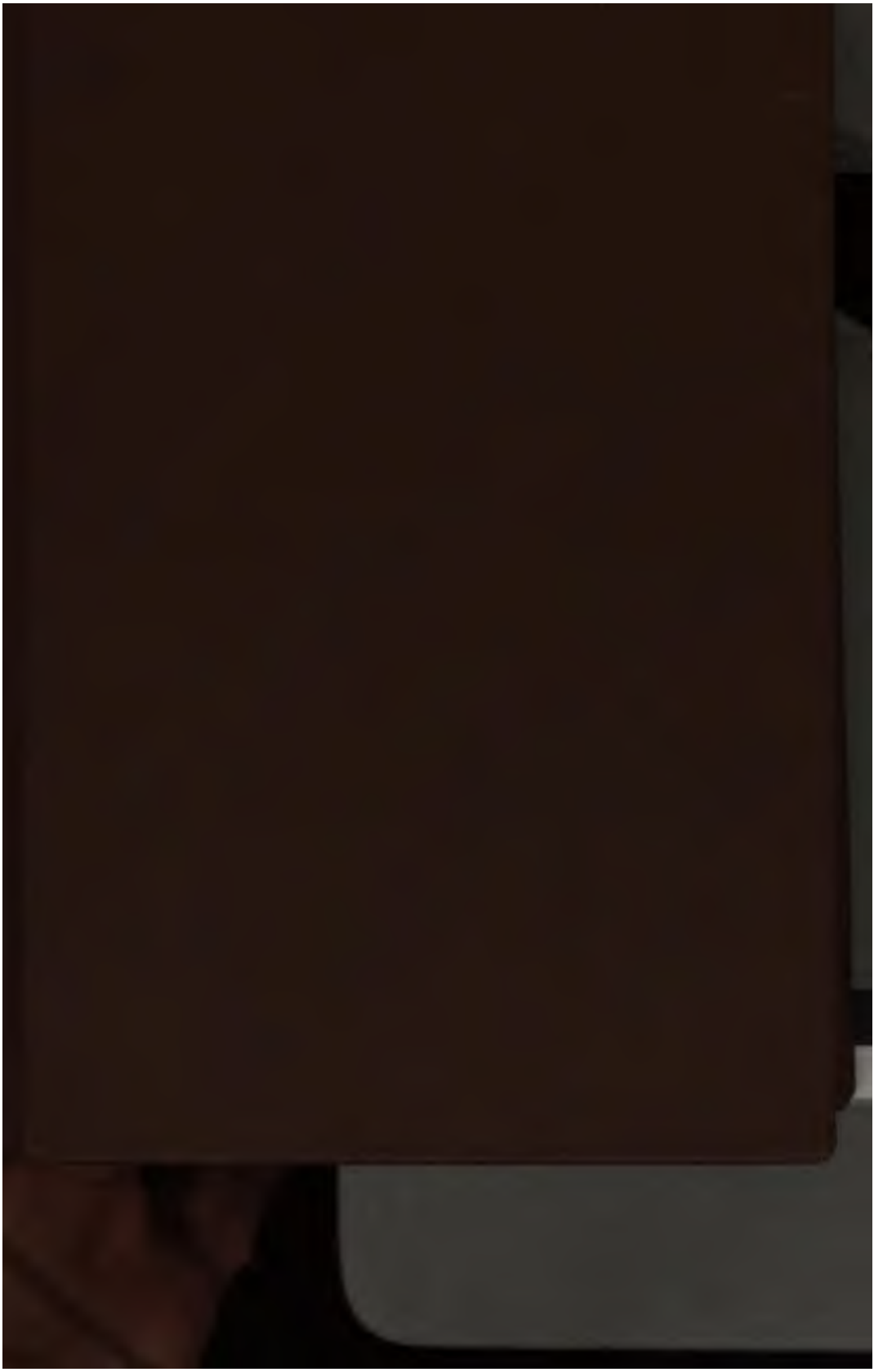

THE

WORKS

OF

DUGALD STEWART.

IN SEVEN VOLUMES.

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THE

PHILOSOPHY

OF THE

ACTIVE AND MORAL POWERS OF MAN.

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THE

PHILOSOPHY

OF THE

ACTIVE AND MORAL POWERS OF MAN.

PREFACE.

BEFORE proceeding to my proper subject, I may be permitted to say something in explanation of the large, and perhaps disproportionate space which I have allotted in these volumes* to the Doctrines of Natural Religion. To account for this I have to observe, that this part of my Work contains the substance of Lectures given in the University of Edinburgh in the year 1792–3, and for almost twenty years afterwards; and that my hearers comprised many individuals, not only from England and the United States of America, but not a few from France, Switzerland, the north of Germany, and other parts of Europe. To those who reflect on the state of the world at that period, and who consider the miscellaneous circumstances and characters of my audience, any further explanation on this head is, I trust, unnecessary.

The danger with which I conceived the youth of this country to be threatened by that inundation of sceptical or rather atheistical publications which were then imported from the Continent, was immensely increased by the enthusiasm which, at the dawn of the French Revolution, was naturally excited in young and generous minds. A supposed connexion between an enlightened zeal for Political Liberty and the reckless boldness of the uncompromising freethinker, operated powerfully with the vain and the ignorant in favor of the publications alluded to.

* [" The Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers of Man " was originally published in two volumes.]

Another circumstance concurred with those which have been mentioned in prompting me to a more full and systematical illustration of these doctrines than had been attempted by any of my predecessors. Certain divines in Scotland were pleased, soon after this critical era, to discover a disposition to set at nought the evidences of Natural Religion, with a professed, and, I doubt not, in many cases, with a sincere view to strengthen the cause of Christianity. Some of these writers were probably not aware that they were only repeating the language of Bayle, Hume, Helvetius, and many other modern authors of the same description, who have endeavoured to cover their attacks upon those essential principles on which all religion is founded, under a pretended zeal for the interests of Revelation. It was not thus, I recollected, that Cudworth, and Barrow, and Locke, and Clarke, and Butler reasoned on the subject; nor those enlightened writers of a later date, who have consecrated their learning and talents to the further illustration of the same argument. "He," says Locke, who has forcibly and concisely expressed their common sentiments, "He that takes away Reason to make way for Revelation puts out the light of both, and does much the same as if we would persuade a man to put out his eyes, the better to receive the light of an invisible star by a telescope." *

This passage from Locke brought to my recollection the memorable words of Melancthon, so remarkably distinguished from most of our other Reformers by the mildness of his temper and the liberality of his opinions: "Wherefore our decision is this; that those precepts which learned men have committed to writing, transcribing them from the common reason and common feelings

* Essay on the Human Understanding, Book iv. chap. 19, § 4.

of human nature, are to be accounted as not less divine than those contained in the tables given to Moses; and that it could not be the intention of our Maker to supersede, by a law graven upon stone, that which is written with his own finger on the table of the heart."

Strongly impressed with these ideas, I published for the use of my students, in November 1793, a small Manual, under the title of Outlines of Moral Philosophy, which I afterwards used as a text book as long as I continued to give lectures in the University. The second part of this Manual contains the same principles, expressed nearly in the same words, with the present publication, in which these principles are much more fully expanded, illustrated, and defended.

My attention was thus imperatively called to this part of my course in a greater degree than to any other, by the aspect of the times when I entered upon the duties of my office as Professor of Moral Philosophy. And it gives me heartfelt satisfaction to believe, that, in consequence of the more general diffusion of knowledge among all ranks of people, such discussions are now become much less necessary than they seemed to me to be at that period. In this belief I am confirmed by the eagerness with which the "Library of Useful Knowledge" has been welcomed by that class of readers for whom it is more peculiarly intended. In the admirable Preliminary Treatise on the Objects, Advantages, and Pleasures of Science, it is said, "The highest of all our gratifications in the contemplation of science remains: We are raised by it to an understanding of the infinite wisdom and goodness which the Creator has displayed in all his works. Not a step can we take in any direction without perceiving the most extraordinary traces of design; and the skill every where conspicuous, is calculated in so vast a proportion of instances to promote

the happiness of living creatures, and especially of ourselves, that we can feel no hesitation in concluding, that, if we knew the whole scheme of Providence, every part would be in harmony with a plan of absolute benevolence." * The same tone has been caught wherever the subject admitted of it by the authors of the subsequent numbers. It is not often (if ever) that those who do not enjoy the advantages of a liberal education have been thus addressed; and the promptitude with which the laboring classes have availed themselves of this means of instruction is the best proof how congenial its spirit is to their plain good sense and unperverted feelings; and how well founded is the saying of Cicero, that "the natural food of our minds is the study and contemplation of Nature." †

I cannot conclude this Preface without expressing the satisfaction I have felt in observing among the more liberal writers in France a reviving taste for the Philosophy of the Human Mind. To this no one has contributed more than M. Victor Cousin, so well known, and so honorably distinguished, as the object of Jesuitical persecution; a persecution which appears to have followed him beyond the limits of his own country. To him the learned world is indebted not only for his own very valuable writings, but for a French translation, accompanied with notes, of the whole works of Plato; for an edition of the works of Proclus, the Platonic Philosopher, from a Manuscript in the Royal Library of Paris; ‡ and, last of all, for a complete edition of the works of Descartes,—a most important publication in the present

* Page 47.

† "Est animorum ingeniorumque nostrorum naturale quoddam quasi pabulum consideratio contemplatioque naturæ." *Acad. Quæst.* L. iv. 41.

‡ Procli Philosophi Platonici Opera, e codd. MSS. Biblioth. Reg. Parisiensis, tum primum edidit, versione Latinâ et Commentariis illustravit Victor Cousin, Professor Philosophiæ in Acad. Parisiensi.

state of science in France. M. Royer Collard, whose great talents have long been zealously devoted to the same pursuits, has, if I am not misinformed, already made considerable progress in a translation of Dr. Reid's Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man,—a report to which I give the more credit, from the account of his previous studies given by a most respectable writer, M. Jouffroy, in a work which appeared at Paris in 1826. "Trahie par ses conséquences et par sa propre méthode, la philosophie de Condillac fut mise en question par un certain nombre d'esprits distingués, et enfin soumise à une discussion publique par M. Royer Collard. Dans les trois années de son enseignement, ce savant Professeur, qui n'est plus pour la France qu'un grand Citoyen, démontra, contre la doctrine de Condillac, ce que Reid avoit demontré contre celle de Locke; et en adoptant la méthode expérimentale de l'école de la sensation, prouva que cette école avoit été infidele à cette méthode. M. Cousin acheva ce que M. Royer Collard avoit commencé. * * * * L'enseignement de ces deux illustres Professeurs devoit porter ses fruits, et il les a portés. Dans l'esprit de ceux qui ont assisté à leurs leçons, il ne reste pas un doute sur la direction que doivent suivre les recherches philosophiques."

And here may I be pardoned for gratifying a personal feeling, by mentioning the pleasure which I have lately received from a perusal of the very elegant translation by M. Jouffroy of my Outlines of Moral Philosophy, preceded by a long introduction full of original and important matter. This publication, together with the space occupied in the *Fragmens Philosophiques* of M. Cousin by large extracts from the same work, comprising nearly the whole of its contents, encourage me in the hope, that the volumes I now publish, which may

be considered as a Comment on the Ethical part of my Outlines, may perhaps find a few who will not only read but study them with attention (for a cursory perusal is altogether useless), in some other countries as well as my own.

Kinneil House, April 16, 1828.

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THE

PHILOSOPHY

OF

THE ACTIVE AND MORAL POWERS OF MAN.

INTRODUCTION.

In my former work on the Human Mind I confined my attention almost exclusively to Man considered as an *intellectual being;* and attempted an analysis of those faculties and powers which compose that part of his nature commonly called his *intellect* or his *understanding.* It is by these faculties that he acquires his knowledge of external objects; that he investigates truth in the sciences; that he combines means in order to attain the ends he has in view; and that he imparts to his fellow creatures the acquisitions he has made. A being might, I think, be conceived, possessed of these principles without any of the active propensities belonging to our species, at least without any of them but the principle of curiosity;—a being formed only for speculation, without any determination to the pursuit of particular external objects, and whose whole happiness consisted in intellectual gratifications.

But although such a being might perhaps be conceived to exist, and although, in studying our internal frame, it be convenient to treat of our intellectual powers apart from our active propensities, yet, in fact, the two are very intimately, and indeed inseparably, connected in all our mental operations. I already hinted, that, even in our speculative inquiries, the principle of curiosity is necessary to account for the exertion we make; and it is still more obvious that a combination of means to accomplish particular ends presupposes some

determination of our nature, which makes the attainment of these ends desirable. Our active propensities, therefore, are the motives which induce us to exert our intellectual powers; and our intellectual powers are the instruments by which we attain the ends recommended to us by our active propensities:

"Reason the card, but passion is the gale."

It will afterwards appear, that our active propensities are not only necessary to produce our intellectual exertions, but that the state of the intellectual powers, in the case of individuals, depends, in a great measure, on the strength of their propensities, and on the particular propensities which are predominant in the temper of their minds. A man of strong philosophical curiosity is likely to possess a much more cultivated and inventive understanding than another of equal natural capacity, destitute of the same stimulus. In like manner, the love of fame, or a strong sense of duty, may compensate for original defects, or may lay the foundation of uncommon attainments. The intellectual powers, too, may be variously modified by the habits arising from avarice, from the animal appetites, from ambition, or from the benevolent affections; insomuch that the moral principles of the miser, of the elegant voluptuary, of the political intriguer, and of the philanthropist, are not, perhaps, more dissimilar than the acquired capacities of their understandings, and the species of information with which their memories are stored. Among the various external indications of character, few circumstances will be found to throw more light on the ruling passions of individuals than the habitual direction of their studies, and the nature of those accomplishments which they have been ambitious to attain.

When Montaigne complains of "the difficulty he experienced in remembering the names of his servants; of his ignorance of the value of the French coins which he was daily handling; and of his inability to distinguish the different kinds of grain from each other, both in the earth and in the granary;" * his observations, instead

* Montaigne's Essays, Book II. Chap. xvii.

of proving the point which he supposed them to establish, (an original and incurable defect in his faculty of memory) only afford an illustration of the little interest he took in things external, and of the preternatural and distempered engrossment of his thoughts with the phenomena of the internal world. To this peculiarity in his turn of mind he has himself alluded, when he says, "I study myself more than any other subject: This is my metaphysic; this my natural philosophy." A person well acquainted with the peculiarities of Montaigne's memory, might, I think, on comparing them with the general superiority of his mental powers, have anticipated him in this specification of the study which almost exclusively occupied his attention.*

Helvetius in his book *de l'Esprit*, (a work which, among many paradoxical and some very pernicious opinions, contains a number of acute and lively observations) has prosecuted with considerable success, this last view of Human Nature, and has collected a variety of amusing facts to illustrate the influence of the passions on the intellectual powers. "It is the passions," he observes, "that rouse the soul from its natural tendency to rest, and surmount the *vis inertæ* to which it is always inclined to yield; and it is the *strong* passions alone that prompt men to the execution of those heroic actions, and give birth to those sublime ideas which command the admiration of ages.

"It is the strength of passion alone that can enable men to defy dangers, pain, and death.

"It is the passions, too, which, by keeping up a perpetual fermentation in our minds, fertilize the same ideas, which, in more phlegmatic temperaments, are barren, and resemble seed scattered on a rock.

* The following remarks of the learned and ingenious Dr. Jortin are not unworthy of the attention of those whose taste leads them to the observation and study of character.

"From the complexion of those anecdotes which a man collects from others, or which he forms by his own pen, may, without much difficulty, be conjectured what manner of man he was.

"The human being is mightily given to assimilation, and, from the stories which any one relates with spirit, from the general tenor of his conversation, and from the books or associates to which he most addicts his attention, the inference cannot be far distant as to the texture of his mind, the vein of his wit, or, may we add, the ruling passion of his heart."—*Jortin's Tracts*, Vol. I. p. 445.

"It is the passions which, having strongly fixed our attention on the object of our desire, lead us to view it under aspects unknown to other men; and which, consequently, prompt heroes to plan and execute those hardy enterprises which must always appear ridiculous to the multitude till the sagacity of their authors has been evinced by success." *

To this passage, which is, I think, just in the main, I have only to object, that, in consequence of the ambiguity of the word *passion*, it is apt to suggest an erroneous idea of the author's meaning. It is plain that he uses it to denote our active principles in general; and, in this sense, there can be no doubt that his doctrine is well founded; inasmuch as, without such principles as curiosity, the love of fame, ambition, avarice, or the love of mankind, our intellectual capacities would for ever remain steril and useless. But it is not in this sense that the word *passion* is most commonly employed. In its ordinary acceptation it denotes those animal impulses which, although they may sometimes prompt to intellectual exertion, are certainly on the whole unfavorable to intellectual improvement. Helvetius himself has not always attended to this ambiguity of language; and hence may be traced many of the paradoxes and errors of his philosophy.

To these slight remarks it may not be useless to subjoin an observation of La Rochefoucald, which is equally refined and just; and which, in its practical tendency, calls the attention to a source of danger in a quarter where it is too seldom apprehended. "It is a mistake to believe that none but the violent passions, such as ambition and love, are able to triumph over the other active principles. Laziness, as languid as it is, often gets the mastery of them all; overrules all the designs and actions of life, and insensibly consumes and destroys both passions and virtues."

From the foregoing observations it appears, that, in accounting for the diversities of genius and of intellectual character among men, important lights may be de-

* De l'Esprit, Discours iii. Chap. vi.

rived from an examination of their active propensities. It is of more consequence for me, however, to remark at present the intimate relation which an analysis of these propensities bears to the theory of morals, and its practical connexion with our opinions on the duties and the happiness of human life. Indeed it is in this way alone that the light of nature enables us to form any reasonable conclusions concerning the ends and destination of our being, and the purposes for which we were sent into the world: *Quid sumus, et quidnam victuri gignimur.** It forms, therefore, a necessary introduction to the science of ethics, or rather is the foundation on which that science rests.

In prosecuting our inquiries into the Active and the Moral Powers of Man, I propose, *first*, to attempt a classification and analysis of the most important principles belonging to this part of our constitution; and, *secondly*, to treat of the various branches of our duty. Under the former of these heads, my principal aim will be to illustrate the essential distinction between those active principles which originate in man's rational nature, and those which urge him, by a blind and instinctive impulse, to their respective objects.

In general, it may be here remarked, that the word *action* is properly applied to those exertions which are consequent on volition, whether the exertion be made on external objects, or be confined to our mental operations. Thus, we say the mind is active when engaged in study. In ordinary discourse, indeed, we are apt to confound together action and motion. As the operations in the minds of other men escape our notice, we can judge of their activity only from the sensible effects it produces; and hence we are led to apply the character of activity to those whose bodily activity is the most remarkable, and to distinguish mankind into two classes, the active and the speculative. In the present instance, the word *active* is used in its most extensive signification, as applicable to every voluntary exertion.

* Persius, Sat. iii. l. 67.

According to the definition now given of the word *action*, the primary sources of our activity are the circumstances in which the acts of the will originate. Of these there are some which make a part of our constitution, and which, on that account, are called Active Principles. Such are hunger, thirst, the appetite which unites the sexes, curiosity, ambition, pity, resentment. These active principles are also called powers of the will, because, by stimulating us in *various* ways to action, they afford exercise to our sense of duty and our other rational principles of action, and give occasion to our voluntary determinations as free agents.

The study of this part of our constitution, although it may at first view seem to lie more open to our examination than the powers of the understanding, is attended with some difficulties peculiar to itself. For this, various reasons may be assigned; among which there are two that seem principally to claim our attention: 1. When we wish to examine the nature of any of our intellectual principles we can at all times subject the faculty in question to the scrutiny of *reflection;* and can institute whatever experiments with respect to it may be necessary for ascertaining its general laws. It is characteristical of all our operations, purely intellectual, to leave the mind cool and undisturbed, so that the *exercise* of the faculties concerned in them does not prevent us from an analytical investigation of their theory. The case is very different with our active powers, particularly with those which, from their violence and impetuosity, have the greatest influence on human happiness. When we are under the dominion of the power, or, in plainer language, when we are hurried by *passion* to the pursuit of a particular end, we feel no inclination to speculate concerning the mental phenomena. When the tumult subsides, and our curiosity is awakened concerning the past, the moment for observation and experiment is lost, and we are obliged to search for our facts in an imperfect recollection of what was viewed, even in the *first* instance, through the most troubled and deceitful of all *media*.

Something connected with this is the following re-

mark of Mr. Hume: "Moral philosophy has this peculiar disadvantage, which is not to be found in natural, that, in collecting its experiments, it cannot make them purposely, with premeditation, and after such a manner as to satisfy itself concerning every particular difficulty that may arise. When I am at a loss to know the effects of one body upon another in any situation, I need only put them in that situation, and observe what results from it. But should I endeavour to clear up, after the same manner, any doubts in moral philosophy, by placing myself in the same case with that which I consider, 'tis evident, that this reflection and premeditation would so disturb the operation of my natural principles, as must render it impossible to form any just conclusion from the phenomenon. We must therefore glean up our experiments in this science from a cautious observation of human life, and take them as they appear in the common course of the world, by men's behaviour in company, in affairs, and in their pleasures." *

2. Another circumstance which adds much to the difficulty of this branch of study, is the great variety of our active principles, and the endless diversity of their combinations in the character of men. The same action may proceed from very different, and even opposite motives in the case of two individuals, and even in the same individual on different occasions;—or, an action which in one man proceeds from a single motive, may, in another, proceed from a number of motives conspiring together and modifying each other's effects. The philosophers who have speculated on this subject, have in general been misled by an excessive love of simplicity, and have attempted to explain the phenomena from the smallest possible number of data. Overlooking the real complication of our active principles, they have sometimes fixed on a single one, (good or bad, according as they were disposed to think well or ill of human nature) and have deduced from it a plausible explanation of all the varieties of human character and conduct.

Our inquiries on this subject must be conducted in one of two ways, either by studying the characters of

* Treatise of Human Nature, *Vol. I. pp. 9, 10, 1st edition.*

other men, or by studying our own. In the former way, we may undoubtedly collect many useful hints, and many facts to confirm or to limit our conclusions; but the conjectures we form concerning the motives of others are liable to so much uncertainty, that it is chiefly by attending to what passes in our own minds that we can reasonably hope to ascertain the general laws of our constitution as active and moral beings.

Even this plan of study, however, as I already hinted, requires uncommon perseverance, and still more uncommon candor. The difficulty is great of attending to any of the operations of the mind; but this difficulty is much increased in those cases in which we are led by vanity or timidity to fancy that we have an interest in concealing the truth from our own knowledge.

Most men, perhaps, are disposed, in consequence of these and some other causes, to believe themselves better than they really are; and a few, there is reason to suspect, go into the opposite extreme, from the influence of false systems of philosophy or religion, or from the gloomy views inspired by a morbid melancholy.

When to these considerations we add the endless metaphysical disputes on the subject of the will, and of man's free agency, it may easily be conceived that the field of inquiry upon which we are now to enter abounds with questions not less curious and intricate than any of those which have been hitherto under our review. In point of practical importance some of them will be found in a still higher degree entitled to our attention.

In the further prosecution of this subject, I shall avoid, as much as possible, all technical divisions and classifications, and shall content myself with the following enumeration of our Active Principles, which I hope will be found sufficiently distinct and comprehensive for our purposes.

1. Appetites.
2. Desires.
3. Affections.
4. Self-love.
5. The Moral faculty.

The three first may be distinguished (for a reason which will afterwards appear) by the title of *Instinctive or Implanted Propensities;* the two last by the title of *Rational and Governing Principles of Action.**

* In the above enumeration I have departed widely from Dr. Reid's language. (See his Essays on the Active Powers, Essay 3d, Parts 1st, 2d, and 3d.) This great philosopher, with whom I am always unwilling to differ, refers our active principles to three classes, the Mechanical, the Animal, and the Rational; using all these three words with what I think a very exceptionable latitude. My reasons for objecting to the use he makes of the words *animal* and *rational* will appear in the sequel. On this occasion I shall only observe, that the word *mechanical* (under which he comprehends our *instinct and habits)* cannot, in my opinion, be properly applied to any of our active principles. It is indeed used, in this instance, merely as a term of distinction; but it *seems* to imply some theory concerning the nature of the principles comprehended under it, and is apt to suggest incorrect notions on the subject. If I had been disposed to examine this part of our constitution with all the minute accuracy of which it is susceptible, I should have preferred the following arrangement to that which I have adopted, as well as to that proposed by Dr. Reid. 1. Of our *original* principles of action. 2. Of our *acquired* principles of action. The original principles of action may be subdivided into the *animal* and the *rational;* to the former of which classes our *instincts* ought undoubtedly to be referred as well as our *appetites*. In Dr. Reid's arrangement, nothing appears more unaccountable, if not capricious, than to call our appetites *animal* principles, because they are common to man and to the brutes; and, at the same time, to distinguish our *instincts* by the title of *mechanical;*—when, of all our active propensities, there are none in which the nature of man bears so strong an analogy to that of the lower animals as in these instinctive impulses. Indeed, it is from the condition of the brutes that the word *instinct* is transferred to that of man by a sort of figure or metaphor.

Our *acquired* principles of action comprehend all those propensities to act which we acquire from habit. Such are our artificial appetites and artificial desires, and the various factitious motives of human conduct generated by association and fashion. At present, it being useless for any of the purposes which I have in view to attempt so comprehensive and detailed an examination of the subject, I shall confine myself to the general enumeration already mentioned. As our appetites, our desires, and our affections, whether original or acquired, stand in the same common relation to the Moral Faculty, (the illustration of which is the chief object of this volume,) I purposely avoid those slighter and less important subdivisions which might be thought to savour unnecessarily of scholastic subtilty.

BOOK FIRST.

OF OUR INSTINCTIVE PRINCIPLES OF ACTION.

CHAPTER FIRST.

OF OUR APPETITES.

THIS class of our Active Principles is distinguished by the following circumstances.

1. They take their rise from the body, and are common to us with the brutes.

2. They are not constant but occasional.

3. They are accompanied with an uneasy sensation, which is strong or weak in proportion to the strength or weakness of the appetite.

Our appetites are three in number, hunger, thirst, and the appetite of sex. Of these, two were intended for the preservation of the individual; the third for the continuation of the species; and without them reason would have been insufficient for these important purposes. Suppose, for example, that the appetite of hunger had been no part of our constitution, reason and experience might have satisfied us of the necessity of food to our preservation; but how should we have been able, without an implanted principle, to ascertain, according to the varying state of our animal economy, the proper seasons for eating, or the quantity of food that is salutary to the body? The lower animals not only receive this information from nature, but are, moreover, directed by instinct to the particular sort of food that is proper for them to use in health and in sickness. The senses of taste and smell, in the savage state of our species, are subservient, at least in some degree, to the same purpose.

Our appetites can, with no propriety, be called *selfish*,

for they are directed to their respective objects as ultimate ends, and they must all have operated, *in the first instance*, prior to any experience of the pleasure arising from their gratification. *After* this experience, indeed, the desire of enjoyment will naturally come to be combined with the appetite; and it may sometimes lead us to stimulate or provoke the appetite with a view to the pleasure which is to result from indulging it. Imagination, too, and the association of ideas, together with the social affections, and sometimes the moral faculty, lend their aid, and all conspire together in forming a complex passion, in which the animal appetite is only one ingredient. In proportion as this passion is gratified, its influence over the conduct becomes the more irresistible, (for all the *active* determinations of our nature are strengthened by habit) till at last we struggle in vain against its tyranny. A man so enslaved by his animal appetites exhibits humanity in one of its most miserable and contemptible forms.

As an additional proof of the misery of such a state, it is of great importance to remark, that, while habit strengthens all our *active* determinations, it diminishes the liveliness of our passive *impressions*;—a remarkable instance of which occurs in the effects produced by an immoderate use of strong liquors, which, at the same time that it confirms the active habit of intemperance, deadens and destroys the sensibility of the palate. In consequence of this law of our nature the evils of excessive indulgence are doubled, inasmuch as our sensibility to pleasure decays in proportion as the cravings of appetite increase.

In general, it will be found, that, wherever we attempt to enlarge the sphere of enjoyment beyond the limits prescribed by nature, we frustrate our own purpose.

A man so enslaved by his appetites may undoubtedly, in one sense, be called *selfish*; for, as he must necessarily neglect the duties he owes to others, he may be presumed to be deficient in the benevolent affections. But it cannot be said of him that he is actuated by an inordinate *self-love*, (meaning by that word an excessive regard for his own happiness) for he sacrifices

to the meanest gratifications all the noblest pleasures of which he is susceptible, and sacrifices to the pleasure of the moment the permanent enjoyments of health, reputation, and conscience. This is true even when the desire of gratification is combined with the original appetite; for no two principles can be more widely at variance than the desire of gratification and the desire of happiness.

Of the errors introduced into morals, in consequence of the vague use of the words *selfishness* and *self-love*, I shall afterwards take notice. What I wish chiefly to remark at present is, that in no sense of these words can we refer to them the origin of our animal appetites; and that the active propensities comprehended under this title are ultimate facts in the human constitution.

Besides our natural appetites we have many acquired ones. Such are our appetite for tobacco, for opium, and for other intoxicating drugs. In general, every thing that stimulates the nervous system produces a subsequent languor, which gives rise to a desire of repetition.

The universality of this appetite for intoxicating drugs is a curious fact in the history of our species. "It seems," says Dr. Robertson, "to have been one of the first exertions of human ingenuity to discover some composition of an intoxicating quality; and there is hardly any nation so rude, or so destitute of invention, as not to have succeeded in this fatal research. The most barbarous of the American tribes have been so unfortunate as to attain this art; and even those who are so deficient in knowledge as to be unacquainted with the method of giving an inebriating strength to liquors by fermentation can accomplish the same end by other means. The people of the islands of North America and of California used for this purpose the smoke of tobacco, drawn up with a certain instrument into the nostrils, the fumes of which ascending to the brain, they felt all the transports and frenzy of intoxication. In almost every part of the new world the natives possessed the art of extracting an intoxicating liquor from Maize, or the Manioc root, the same

substances which they convert into bread. The operation by which they affect this nearly resembles the common one of brewing, but with this difference, that, instead of yest, they use a nauseous infusion of maize or manioc chewed by their women. The saliva excites a vigorous fermentation, and in a few days the liquor becomes fit for drinking. It is not disagreeable to the taste, and, when swallowed in large quantities, is of an inebriating quality. This is the general beverage of the Americans, which they distinguish by different names, and for which they feel such a violent and insatiable desire, as it is not easy either to conceive or describe." *

Many striking confirmations of this remark occur in the voyages of Cook and of later navigators.

Our occasional propensities to action and to repose are, in many respects, analogous to our appetites. They have indeed all the three characteristics of our appetites already mentioned. They are common, too, to man and to the lower animals, and they operate, in our own species, in the most infant state of the individual. In general, every animal we know is prompted by an instinctive impulse to take that degree of exercise which is salutary to the body, and is prevented from passing the bounds of moderation by that languor and desire of repose which are the consequences of continued exertion.

There is something also very similar to this with respect to the mind. We are impelled by nature to the exercise of its different faculties, and we are warned, when we are in danger of overstraining them, by a consciousness of fatigue. After we are exhausted by a long course of application to business, how delightful are the first moments of indolence and repose! *O che bella cosa di far niente!* We are apt to imagine that no inducement shall again lead us to engage in the bustle of the world: but, after a short respite from our labors, our intellectual vigor returns; the mind rouses from its lethargy "like a giant from his sleep," and we feel ourselves urged by an irresistible impulse to return to our duties as members of society.

* *History of America, Vol. I p.* 396, 4to Edition.

The active principles already mentioned are common to man and to the brutes. But besides these the latter have some instinctive impulses of which I do not know that there are any traces to be found in the human race. Such are those *antipathies* which they discover against the natural enemies of their respective tribes. It is probable, I think, that their existence is guarded entirely by their appetites and antipathies; for the desire of self-preservation implies a degree of reason and reflection which they do not appear to possess. Even in the case of man this desire is probably the result of his experience of the pleasures which life affords; and, accordingly, (as Dr. Beattie very finely remarks) Milton has, with exquisite judgment, represented *Adam*, in the first moments of his being, as contemplating, without anxiety or regret, the idea of immediate annihilation.

> "While thus I call'd and stray'd I knew not whither
> From where I first drew air, and first beheld
> This happy light, and answer none return'd,
> On a green shady bank profuse of flowers
> Pensive I sat me down. There gentle sleep
> *First* found me, and with soft oppression seiz'd
> My drowsed sense; UNTROUBLED though I thought
> I then was passing to my former state
> Insensible, and forthwith to dissolve!"

CHAPTER SECOND.

OF OUR DESIRES.

OUR Desires are distinguished from our Appetites by the following circumstances :—

1. They do not take their rise from the body.

2. They do not operate periodically after certain intervals, nor do they cease after the attainment of a particular object.

The most remarkable active principles belonging to this class are,

1. The Desire of Knowledge, or the principle of Curiosity.*

2. The Desire of Society.

3. The Desire of Esteem.

4. The Desire of Power, or the principle of Ambition.

5. The Desire of Superiority, or the principle of Emulation.

SECTION I.

The Desire of Knowledge.

THE principle of curiosity appears in children at a very early period, and is commonly proportioned to the degree of intellectual capacity they possess. The direction, too, which it takes is regulated by nature according to the order of our wants and necessities ; being confined, in the first instance, exclusively to those properties of material objects, and those laws of the mate-

* I have already remarked, (see note p. 9,) that in this part of his work Dr. Reid has used some terms with an undue latitude. Of this a very remarkable instance occurs in the use he has made of the adjective *Animal*; in consequence of which he has been led to rank among our *animal* principles of action (that is, among the active principles common to man with the brutes) not only the desire of knowledge and the desire of esteem, but pity to the distressed, patriotism, and other benevolent affections.

rial world, an acquaintance with which is essential to the preservation of our animal existence. Hence the instinctive eagerness with which children handle and examine every thing which is presented to them; an employment which we are commonly apt to consider as a mere exercise of their animal powers, but which, if we reflect on the limited province of sight prior to experience, and on the early period of life at which we are able to judge by the eye of the distances and of the tangible qualities of bodies, will appear plainly to be the most useful occupation in which they could be engaged, if it were in the power of a philosopher to have the regulation of their attention from the hour of their birth. In more advanced years curiosity displays itself in one way or another in every individual, and gives rise to an infinite diversity in their pursuits—engrossing the attention of one man about physical causes—of another about mathematical truths—of a third about historical facts—of a fourth about the objects of natural history—of a fifth about the transactions of private families, or about the politics and news of the day.

Whether this diversity be owing to natural pre-disposition, or to early education, it is of little consequence to determine, as upon either supposition, a preparation is made for it in the original constitution of the mind, combined with the circumstances of our external situation. Its final cause is also sufficiently obvious, as it is this which gives rise in the case of individuals to a limitation of attention and study, and lays the foundation of all the advantages which society derives from the division and subdivision of intellectual labor.

These advantages are so great that some philosophers have attempted to resolve the desire of knowledge into self-love. But to this theory the same objection may be stated which was already made to the attempts of some philosophers to account, in a similar way, for the origin of our appetites; that all of these are active principles, manifestly directed by nature to particular specific objects, as their ultimate ends;—that, as the object of hunger is not happiness but food, so the object of curiosity is not happiness but knowledge. To

this analogy Cicero has very beautifully alluded, when he calls knowledge the natural food of the understanding. "Est animorum ingeniorumque nostrorum naturale quoddam quasi pabulum consideratio contemplatioque naturæ." We can indeed conceive a being prompted merely by the cool desire of happiness to accumulate information; but, in a creature like man, endowed with a variety of other active principles, the stock of his knowledge would probably have been scanty, unless self-love had been aided in this particular by the principle of curiosity.

Although, however, the desire of knowledge is not resolvable into self-love, it is not in itself an object of *moral approbation*. A person may indeed employ his intellectual powers with a view to his own moral improvement, or to the happiness of society, and so far he acts from a laudable principle. But to prosecute study merely from the desire of knowledge is neither virtuous nor vicious. When not suffered to interfere with our duties it is morally innocent. The virtue or vice does not lie in the desire, but in the proper or improper regulation of it. The ancient astronomer who, when accused of indifference with respect to public transactions, answered that *his* country was in the heavens, acted criminally, inasmuch as he suffered his desire of knowledge to interfere with the duties which he owed to mankind.

At the same time it must be admitted, that the desire of knowledge (and the same observation is applicable to our other desires) is of a more dignified nature than those appetites which are common to us with the brutes. A thirst for science has been always considered as a mark of a liberal and elevated mind; and it generally co-operates with the moral faculty in forming us to those habits of self-government which enable us to keep our animal appetites in due subjection.

There is another circumstance which renders this desire peculiarly estimable, that it is always accompanied with a strong desire to communicate our knowledge to others; insomuch, that it has been doubted if the principle of curiosity would be sufficiently powerful to animate the intellectual exertions of any man in a long

course of persevering study, if he had no prospect of being ever able to impart his acquisitions to his friends or to the public. "Si quis in cœlum ascendisset," says Cicero, "naturamque mundi et pulchritudinem siderum perspexisset, insuavem illam admirationem ei fore, quæ jucundissima fuisset, si aliquem cui narraret habuisset. Sic natura solitarium nihil amat, semperque ad aliquod quasi adminiculum annititur, quod in amicissimo quoque dulcissimum est." * And to the same purpose Seneca: "Nec me ulla res delectabit, licet eximia sit et salutaris, quam mihi uni sciturus sim. Si cum hac exceptione detur sapientia, ut illam inclusam teneam, nec enunciem, rejiciam: nullius boni, sine socio, jucunda possessio est." †

A strong curiosity, properly directed, may be justly considered as one of the most important elements in philosophical genius; and, accordingly, there is no circumstance of greater consequence in education than to keep the curiosity always awake, and to turn it to useful pursuits. I cannot help, therefore, disapproving greatly of a very common practice in this country, that of communicating to children general and superficial views of science and history by means of popular introductions. In this way we rob their future studies of all that interest which can render study agreeable, and reduce the mind in the pursuits of science, to the same state of listlessness and languor as when we toil through the pages of a tedious novel after being made acquainted with the final catastrophe.

It would contribute greatly to the culture and the guidance of this principle of curiosity if the different sciences were taught as much as possible in the order of the *analytic* rather than in that of the *synthetic* method; a plan, however, which I readily admit it is not so practicable to carry into effect in a course of public as of private instruction. Such a mode of education too would be attended with the additional advantage of accustoming the student to the proper method of investigation; and thereby preparing him in due time to enter on the career of invention and discovery. Nor is this

* De Amicitiâ. † Seneca, Ep. 6.

all. It would impress the knowledge he thus acquired, in some measure by his own ingenuity, much more deeply on his *memory* than if it were passively imbibed from books or teachers;—in the same manner as the windings of a road make a more lasting impression on the mind, when we have once travelled it alone, and inquired out the way at every turn, than if we had travelled along it an hundred times, trusting ourselves implicitly to the guidance of a companion.

I am happy to be confirmed in this opinion by its coincidence with what has been excellently remarked on the same subject by Miss Edgeworth in her treatise on Practical Education; * a work equally distinguished by good sense and by originality of thought. The passage I allude to more particularly at present is the short dialogue about *the steam engine, as improved by Mr. Watt.*

SECTION II.

The Desire of Society.

ABSTRACTING from these affections which interest us in the happiness of others, and from all the advantages which we ourselves derive from the social union, we are led by a natural and instinctive desire to associate with our species. This principle is easily discernible in the minds of children long before the dawn of reason. "Attend only," says an intelligent and accurate observer, "to the eyes, the features, and the gestures of a child on the breast when another child is presented to it;—both instantly, previous to the possibility of instruction or habit, exhibit the most evident expressions of joy. Their eyes sparkle, and their features and gestures demonstrate, in the most unequivocal manner, a mutual attachment. When further advanced, children, who are strangers to each other, though their social appetite be equally strong, discover a mutual shyness of approach, which, however, is soon conquered by the more powerful instinct of association." †

* Practical Education, Vol. I. p. 592 et seq. 4to Edition.
† Smellie's Philosophy *of Natural History*, p. 416.

In the lower animals too very evident traces of the same instinct appear. In some of these we observe a species of union strikingly analogous to political associations among men: in others we observe occasional unions among individuals to accomplish a particular purpose,—to repel, for example, a hostile assault;—but there are also various tribes which discover a desire of society, and a pleasure in the company of their own species, without an apparent reference to any further end. Thus we frequently see horses, when confined alone in an enclosure, neglect their food and break the fences to join their companions in the contiguous field. Every person must have remarked the spirit and alacrity with which this animal exerts himself on the road, when accompanied by another animal of his own species, in comparison of what he discovers when travelling alone; and, with respect to oxen and cows, it has been asserted, that even in the finest pasture they do not fatten so rapidly in a solitary state as when they feed together in a herd.

What is the final cause of the associating instinct in such animals as have now been mentioned, it is not easy to conjecture, unless we suppose that it was intended merely to augment the sum of their enjoyments. But whatever opinion we may form on this point, it is indisputable that the instinctive determination is a strong one, and that it produces striking effects on the habits of the animal, even when external circumstances are the most unfavorable to its operation. Horses and oxen, for example, when deprived of companions of their own species, associate and become attached to each other. The same thing sometimes happens between individuals that belong to tribes naturally hostile; as between dogs and cats, or between a cat and a bird.

If these facts be candidly considered, there will appear but little reason to doubt the existence of the social instinct in our own species, when it is so agreeable to the general analogy of nature, as displayed through the rest of the animal creation. As this point, however, has been controverted warmly by authors of eminence, it will be necessary to consider it with some attention.

The question with respect to the social or the solitary

nature of man seems to me to amount to this, whether man has any disinterested principles which lead him to unite with his fellow creatures; or whether the social union be the result of prudential views of self-interest, suggested by the experience of his own insufficiency to procure the objects of his natural desires. Of these two opinions Hobbes has maintained the latter, and has endeavoured to establish it by proving, that in what he calls the state of nature every man is an enemy to his brother, and that it was the experience of the evils arising from these hostile dispositions that induced men to unite in a political society. In proof of this he insists on the terror which children feel at the sight of a stranger; on the apprehension which, he says, a person naturally feels when he hears the tread of a foot in the dark; on the universal invention of locks and keys; and on various other circumstances of a similar nature.

That this theory of Hobbes is contrary to the universal history of mankind cannot be disputed. Man has always been found in a social state; and there is reason even for thinking, that the principles of union which nature has implanted in his heart operate with the greatest force in those situations in which the advantages of the social union are the smallest. As society advances, the relations among individuals are continually multiplied, and man is rendered the more necessary to man: But it may be doubted, if, in a period of great refinement, the social affections be as warm and powerful as when the species were wandering in the forest.

Besides, it does not seem to be easy to conceive in what manner Hobbes's supposition could be realized. Surely, if there be a foundation for any thing laid in the constitution of man's nature it is for family union. The infant of our species continues longer in a helpless state, and requires longer the protecting care of both parents, than the young of any other animal. Before the first child is able to provide for itself a second and a third are produced, and thus the union of the sexes, supposing it at first to have been merely casual, is insensibly confirmed by habit, and cemented by the common interest which both parents take in their offspring. So just is

the simple and beautiful statement of the fact given by Montesquieu, "That man is born in society, and there he remains."

From these considerations, it appears that the social union does not take its rise from views of self-interest, but that it forms a necessary part of the condition of man from the constitution of his nature. It is true, indeed, that before he begins to reflect he finds himself connected with society by a thousand ties; so that, independently of any social instinct, prudence would undoubtedly prevent him from abandoning his fellow creatures. But still it is evident that the social instinct forms a part of human nature, and has a tendency to unite men even when they stand in no need of each other's assistance. Were the case otherwise, prudence and the social disposition would be only different names for the same principle, whereas it is matter of common remark, that although the two principles be by no means inconsistent when kept within reasonable bounds, yet that the former, when it rises to any excess, is in a great measure exclusive of the latter. I hinted too already, that it is in societies where individuals are most independent of each other as to their animal wants, that the social principles operate with the greatest force.

According to the view of the subject now given, the multiplied wants and necessities of man in his infant state, by laying the foundation of the family union, impose upon our species, as a necessary part of their condition, those social connexions which are so essential to our improvement and happiness. And, therefore, nothing could be more unphilosophical than the complaints which the ancient Epicureans founded upon this circumstance, and which Lucretius has so pathetically expressed in the following verses:

> "Tum porro puer, ut sævis projectus ab undis
> Navita, nudus humi jacet, infans, indigus omni
> Vitali auxilio, cum primum in luminis oras
> Nixibus ex alvo matris natura profudit:
> Vagituque locum lugubri complet, ut æquum est,
> Cui tantum in vitâ restat transire malorum." *

* Lib. v. l. 223.

The philosophy of Pope is in this respect much more pleasing and much more solid:

"Heaven forming each on other to depend,
A master, or a servant, or a friend,
Bids each on other for assistance call,
Till one man's weakness grows the strength of all.
Wants, frailties, passions, closer still ally
The common interest, or endear the tie.
To these we owe true friendship, love sincere,
Each home-felt joy, that life inherits here." *

The considerations now stated afford a beautiful illustration of the beneficent design with which the physical condition of man is adapted to the principles of his moral constitution; an adaptation so striking, that it is not surprising those philosophers, who are fond of simplifying the theory of human nature, should have attempted to account for the origin of these principles from the habits which our external circumstances impose. In this, as in many other instances, their attention has been misled by the spirit of system from those wonderful combinations of means to particular ends, which are everywhere conspicuous in the universe. It is not by the physical condition of man that the essential principles of his mind are formed; but the one is fitted to the other by the same superintending wisdom which adapts the fin of the fish to the water, and the wing of the bird to the air, and which scatters the seeds of the vegetable tribes in those soils and exposures where they are fitted to vegetate. It is not the wants and necessities of his animal being which *create* his social principles, and which produce an artificial and interesting league among individuals who are naturally solitary and hostile; but, determined by instinct to society, endowed with innumerable principles which have a reference to his fellow creatures, he is placed by the condition of his birth in that element, where alone the perfection and happiness of his nature are to be found.

In speaking of the lower animals, I before observed, that such of them as are instinctively social discover the secret workings of nature even when removed from the

* See on this subject the Moralists of Lord Shaftesbury.

society of their kind. This fact amounts in *their* case to a demonstration of that mutual adaptation of the different parts of nature to each other which I have just remarked. It demonstrates that the structure of their *internal* frame is purposely adjusted to that *external* scene in which they are destined to be placed. As the lamb, when it strikes with its forehead while yet unarmed, proves that it is not its weapons which determine its instincts, but that it has preexistent instincts suited to its weapons, so when we see an animal deprived of the sight of his fellows cling to a stranger, or disarm, by his caresses, the rage of an enemy, we perceive the workings of a social instinct, not only not superinduced by external circumstances, but manifesting itself in spite of circumstances which are adverse to its operation. The same remark may be extended to man. When in solitude he languishes, and by making companions of the lower animals, or by attaching himself to inanimate objects, strives to fill up the void of which he is conscious. "Were I in a desert," (says an author who, amid all his extravagances and absurdities, sometimes writes like a *wise* man, and, where the moral feelings are at all concerned, never fails to write like a *good* man)—"Were I in a desert, I would find out wherewith in it to call forth my affections. If I could not do better, I would fasten them upon some sweet myrtle, or seek some melancholy cypress to connect myself to; I would court their shade, and greet them kindly for their protection. I would cut my name upon them, and swear they were the loveliest trees throughout the desert. If their leaves withered, I would teach myself to mourn, and when they rejoiced, I would rejoice along with them."

The Count de Lauzun was confined by Louis the Fourteenth for nine years in the Castle of Pignerol, in a small room where no light could enter but from a chink in the roof. In this solitude he attached himself to a spider, and contrived for some time to amuse himself with attempting to tame it, with catching flies for its support, and with superintending the progress of its web. The jailor discovered his amusement, and killed the spider; and the Count used afterwards to declare,

that the pang he felt on the occasion could be compared only to that of a mother for the loss of a child.*

This anecdote is quoted by Lord Kames in his Sketches, and by the late Lord Auckland in his Principles of Penal Law. It is remarkable that both these learned and respectable writers should have introduced it into their works on account of the shocking incident of the jailor, and as a proof of the pure and unprovoked malice of which some minds are capable, without taking any notice of it as a beautiful picture of the feelings of a man of sensibility in a state of solitude, and of his disposition to create to himself some object upon which he may rest those affections which have a reference to society.

It will be said that *these* are the feelings of one who has experienced the pleasures of social life, and that no inference can be drawn from such facts in opposition to Hobbes. But if they do not prove in man an instinctive impulse towards society prior to experience, they at least prove that he feels a delight in the society of his fellow creatures, which no view of self-interest is sufficient to explain.

It does not belong to our present speculation to illustrate the importance of the social union to our improvement and our happiness. Its subserviency to both, (abstracting entirely from its necessity for the complete gratification of our physical wants) is much greater than we should be disposed at first to apprehend. In proof of this, it is sufficient to mention here its connexion with the culture of our intellectual faculties, and with the developement of our moral principles. Illustrations of this may be drawn from the low state in which both these parts of our nature are generally found in the deaf and dumb, and from the effects which a few months' education sometimes has in unfolding their mental powers. The pleasing change which in the meantime takes place in their once vacant countenances, when animated and

* In Delille's poem on *the Imagination*, the same anecdote which is is here told of the Count de Lauzun is attributed to Pelisson, a celebrated literary and political character in the reign of Louis the Fourteenth, who was confined four years in the Bastille, on account of his connexion with the disgraced minister *Foucquet*. See end of Chant. VI.

lighted up by an active and inquisitive mind, cannot escape the notice of the most careless observer.*

SECTION III.

The Desire of Esteem.

THIS principle, as well as those we have now been considering, discovers itself at a very early period in infants,

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*For an additional illustration of the same thing, see a remarkable case of recovery from deafness and dumbness in the history of the Royal Academy of Sciences at Paris for the year 1703.

A doctrine similar to that which I have now been controverting, concerning the origin of society, was maintained by some of the ancient sophists, and has found advocates in every age among those writers who wish to depreciate human nature, as well as among many who were anxious to represent man as entirely the creature of education and government, with the view of inculcating implicit and passive obedience to the civil magistrate. In Buchanan's elegant and philosophical Dialogue *De Jure Regni apud Scotos*, the question is particularly discussed between the two *interlocutors*, of whom the one ascribes the origin of society to views of utility, (meaning by *utility* the private interest or advantage of the individual;)

—— "'*Ipsa utilitas, justi prope mater et æqui,*'

quæ cœtus hominum primum congregavit, ac jussit

'*Communi dare signa tuba, defendier iisdem*
Turribus, atque una portarum clave teneri.'

In opposition to which doctrine, Buchanan himself, who is the other speaker, contends with great warmth for the existence of social principles in the nature of man, which, independently of any views of interest, lay a foundation for the social union. In the course of his argument on this subject he touches on most of the considerations which have been stated above.

"Magnam profecto videtur quibusdam *utilitas* habere vim, ad societatem publicam humani generis et constituendam et continendam. Sed est, nisi fallor, congregandorum hominum causa longe antiquior, et communitatis eorum inter ipsos multo prius et sanctius vinculum. Alioqui, si commodi sui privatim quisque velit habere rationem, vide, ne illa ipsa utilitas solveret potius quam conjungeret humanam societatem.

"Ea est quædam naturæ vis, non hominibus modo, sed mansuetioribus etiam aliorum animantium indita, ut si etiam absint utilitatis illa blandimenta, tamen cum sui generis animantibus libenter congregentur. At de cæteris in præsentiâ nihil attinet disputare: homini certe a naturâ hanc vim tam videmus alte impressam, ut si quis omnibus iis rebus abundet, quæ vel ad incolumitatem tuendam, vel ad voluptatem et animorum oblectationem comparatæ sunt, sine hominum commercio vitam sibi insuavem sit existimaturus. Quin et illi ipsi, qui cupiditate scientiæ, et studio veri investigandi, se a turbâ removerunt, et in secretos abdiderunt recessus, neque perpetuam animi contentionem ferre diutius potuerunt: nec, si quando eam remisissent, in solitudine se continere poterant: sed illa ipsa secreta sua studia libenter proferebant; et velut in communem utilitatem elaborassent, in medium conferebant sui laboris fructum. Quod si quis est, qui omnino solitudine capiatur, cœtusque hominum fugiat ac devitet, id magis animi morbo quam vi naturæ, fieri existimo: qualem Timonem Atheniensem accepimus, et Corinthium Bellerophontem;

'Qui miser Elæis errabat solus in oris,
Ipse suum cor edens, hominum vestigia vitans.'"

The foregoing passage seems to me curious, as it shows how completely Buchanan had not only anticipated, but refuted the very far fetched argument which Hobbes was soon after to draw from his supposed state of nature in support of his slavish *maxims of government*.

who, long before they are able to reflect on *the advantages* resulting from the good opinion of others, and even before they acquire the use of speech, are sensibly mortified by any expression of neglect or contempt. It seems, therefore, to be *an original principle of our nature*, that is, it does not appear to be resolvable into reason and experience, or into any other principle more general than itself. An additional proof of this is the very powerful influence it has over the mind,—an influence more striking than that of any other active principle whatsoever. Even the love of life daily gives way to the desire of esteem, and of an esteem which, as it is only to effect our memories, cannot be supposed to interest our self-love. In what manner the association of ideas should manufacture, out of the other principles of our constitution, a new principle stronger than them all, it is difficult to conceive.

In these observations I have had an eye to the theories of those modern philosophers who represent self-love, or the desire of happiness, as the only original principle of action in man, and who attempt to account for the origin of *all* our other active principles from habit or the association of ideas. That this theory is just in some instances cannot be disputed. Thus, in the case of *avarice* it is manifest that it is from habit alone it derives its influence over the mind; for no man surely was ever brought into the world with an innate love of money. Money is at first desired, merely as the means of obtaining other objects; but, in consequence of being long and constantly accustomed to direct our efforts to its attainment on account of its apprehended utility, we come at last to pursue it as an ultimate end, and frequently retain our attachment to it long after we have lost all relish for the enjoyments it enables us to command. In like manner it has been supposed that the esteem of our fellow creatures is at first desired on account of its apprehended utility, and that it comes in time to be pursued as an ultimate end, without any reference on our part to the advantages it bestows. In opposition to this doctrine it seems to me to be clear, that as the object of hunger is not happines but food;

as the object of curiosity is not happiness but knowledge; so the object of this principle of action is not happiness, but the esteem and respect of other men. That this is not inconsistent with the analogy of our nature appears from the observations already made on our appetites and desires; and that it really is the fact may be proved by various arguments. Before touching, however, on these, I must remark, that I consider this as merely a question of speculative curiosity; for, upon either supposition, the desire of esteem is equally the work of nature; and consequently, upon either supposition, it is equally unphilosophical to attempt, by metaphysical subtleties, to counteract her wise and beneficent purposes.

Among the different arguments which concur to prove that the desire of esteem is not wholly resolvable into the association of ideas, one of the strongest has already been hinted at,—the early period of life at which this principle discovers itself—long before we are able to form the idea of *happiness*, far less to judge of the circumstances which have a tendency to promote it. The difference in this respect between avarice and the desire of esteem is remarkable. The former is the vice of old age, and is, comparatively speaking, confined to a few. The latter is one of the most powerful engines in the education of children, and is not less universal in its influence than the principle of curiosity.

The desire, too, of *posthumous* fame, of which no man can entirely divest himself, furnishes an insurmountable objection to the theories already mentioned. It is indeed an objection so obvious to the common sense of mankind, that all the philosophers who have leaned to these theories have employed their ingenuity in attempting to resolve this desire into an illusion of the imagination produced by habit. This, too, was the opinion of an excellent writer, and still more excellent man, Mr. Wollaston, who from a well meant, but very mistaken zeal to weaken the influence of this principle of action on human conduct, has been at pains to give as ludicrous an account as possible of its origin. As I differ widely from Wollaston on this point, both in his

theoretical speculations, and in the practical inferences he deduces from them, I shall quote the passage at length, and then subjoin a few remarks on it.

"Men please themselves with notions of immortality, and fancy a perpetuity of fame secured to themselves by books and testimonies of historians; but alas! it is a stupid delusion when they imagine themselves *present* and *enjoying* that fame at the reading of their story after their death. And beside, in reality, the man is not known ever the more to posterity, because his name is transmitted to them: *He* doth not live, because his *name* does. When it is said Julius Cæsar subdued Gaul, beat Pompey, and changed the Roman commonwealth into a monarchy, it is the same thing as to say the conqueror of Pompey was Cæsar; that is, Cæsar and the conquerer of Pompey are the same thing, and Cæsar is as much known by the one designation as by the other. The amount then is only this, that the conqueror of Pompey conquered Pompey, or somebody conquered Pompey; or rather, since Pompey is now as little known as Cæsar, somebody conquered somebody. Such a poor business is this boasted immortality; and such as has been described is the thing called glory among us! The notion of it may serve to excite them who having abilities to serve their country in time of real danger or want, or to do some other good, have yet not philosophy enough to do this upon principles of virtue, or to see through the glories of the world (just as we excite children by praising them, and as we see many good inventions and improvements proceed from emulation and vanity); but to discerning men this fame is mere air, and the next remove from nothing, which they despise, if not shun. I think there are two considerations which may justify a desire of *some* glory or honor, and scarce more. When men have performed any *virtuous* actions, or such as sit easy on their memories, it is a reasonable pleasure to have the testimony of the world added to that of their own consciences, that they have done well. And more than that, if the reputation acquired by any qualification or action may produce a man any *real* comfort or advantage, (if it

be only protection from the insolence and injustice of mankind, or if it enables him, by his authority, to do more good to others) to have this privilege must be a great satisfaction, and what a wise and good man may be allowed, as he has opportunity, to propose to himself. But then he proposes it no further than it may be *useful*, and it can be no further useful than he wants it. So that, upon the whole, glory, praise, and the like, are either mere vanity, or only valuable in proportion to defects and wants." *

It appears from this passage that Wollaston does not consider the desire of posthumous fame as an ultimate fact in our nature, for he proposes a theory to account for it. "It is," says he "a stupid delusion, when men imagine themselves *present* and enjoying that fame at the reading of their story after death." Mr. Smith, too, in his Theory of Moral Sentiments, *seems* to think that the desire of a posthumous fame is to be resolved into an illusion of the imagination. "Men," says he, "have often voluntarily thrown away life to acquire after death a renown which they could no longer enjoy. Their imagination, in the meantime, anticipated that fame which was thereafter to be bestowed upon them; those applauses which they were never to hear rang in their ears; the thoughts of that admiration whose effects they were never to feel, played about their hearts, banished from their breasts the strongest of all natural fears, and transported them to perform actions which seem almost beyond the reach of human nature." But why have recourse to an illusion of the imagination to account for a principle which the wisest of men find it impossible to extinguish in themselves, or even sensibly to weaken; and none more remarkably than some of those who have employed their ingenuity in attempting to turn it into ridicule? Is it possible that men should imagine themselves *present* and enjoying their fame at the reading of their story after death, without being conscious of this operation of the imagination themselves? Is not this to depart from the plain and obvious appearance

* Wollaston's Religion of Nature delineated, pp. 215, 216, 217, 8th Edit. See *Note (A.)* at the end of this volume.

of the fact, and to adopt refinements similar to those by which the selfish philosophers explain away all our disinterested affections? We might as well suppose that a man's regard for the welfare of his posterity and friends after his death does not arise from natural affection, but from an illusion of the imagination, leading him to suppose himself still present with them, and a witness of their prosperity.* If we have confessedly various other propensities directed to specific objects as ultimate ends, where is the difficulty of conceiving that a desire, directed to the good opinion of our fellow creatures, (without any reference to the advantages it is to yield us either now or hereafter) may be among the number?

It would not indeed (as I have already hinted) materially affect the argument, although we should suppose with Wollaston, that the desire of posthumous fame was resolvable into an illusion of the imagination. For, whatever be its origin, it was plainly the intention of nature that all men should be in some measure under its influence; and it is perhaps of little consequence whether we regard it as a principle originally implanted by nature, or suppose that she has laid a foundation for it in other principles which belong universally to the species.

How very powerfully it operates, appears, not only from the heroical sacrifices to which it has led in every age of the world, but from the conduct of the meanest and most worthless of mankind, who, when they are brought to the scaffold in consequence of the clearest and most decisive evidence of their guilt, frequently persevere to the last, with the terrors of futurity full in

* The two cases seem to be so exactly parallel, that it is somewhat surprising that no attempt should have been made to extend to the latter principle of action the same ridicule which has been so lavishly bestowed on the former. So far, however, from this being the case, I believe it will be *universally* granted, that where the latter principle fails in producing its natural and ordinary effect on the conduct, there must exist some defect in the rational or moral character, for which no other good qualities can sufficiently atone. "He that careth not for his own house is worse than an infidel." But if this be acknowledged with respect to the interest we take in the concerns of our connexions after our own disappearance from the present scene, why judge so harshly of the desire of posthumous fame? Do not the two principles often co-operate in stimulating our active exertions to the very same ends? more especially in those cases, (alas! too common) where the inheritance of a respectable name is all that a good man *has it in his* power to bequeath to his family.

their view, in the most solemn protestations of their innocence; and *that* merely in the hope of leaving behind them not a fair, but an equivocal or problematical reputation.

With respect to the other parts of Wollaston's reasoning, that it is only the letters which compose our names that we can transmit to posterity, it is worthy of observation, that, if the argument be good for any thing, it applies equally against the desire of esteem from our contemporaries, excepting in those cases in which we ourselves are personally known by those whose praise we covet, and of whose applause we happen ourselves to be ear witnesses: And yet, undoubtedly, according to the common judgment of mankind, the love of praise is more peculiarly the mark of a liberal and elevated spirit in cases where the gratification it seeks has nothing to recommend it to those whose ruling passions are interest or the love of flattery.* It is precisely for the same reason that the love of posthumous fame is strongest in the noblest and most exalted characters. If self-love were really the *sole* motive in all our actions, Wollaston's reasoning would prove clearly the absurdity of any concern about our memory. "Such a concern," as Dr. Hutcheson observes, "no *selfish* being, who had the modelling of his own nature, would choose to implant in himself. But, since we have not this power, we must be contented to be thus *outwitted by nature into a public interest against our will.*" †

As to the fact on which Wollaston's argument proceeds, is it not more philosophical to consider it as affording an additional *stimulus* to the instinctive love of posthumous fame, by holding it up to the imagination

* That the desire of esteem, if a fantastic principle of action in the one of these cases, is equally so in the other, is remarked by Pope; but, instead of availing himself of this consideration to justify the desire of posthumous renown, he employs it as an argument to expose the nothingness of fame in all cases whatsoever.

"What 's fame? a fancied life in other's breath,
A thing beyond us even before our death.
All that we feel of it begins and ends
In the small circle of our foes and friends;
To all beside as much an empty shade,
An Eugene living, as a Cæsar dead."
Essay on Man, Epistle iv. l. 237.

† Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections.

as the noblest and proudest boast of human ambition, to be able to entail on the casual combination of letters which compose our name, the respect of distant ages, and the blessings of generations yet unborn? Nor is it an unworthy object of the most rational benevolence to render these letters a sort of magical spell for kindling the emulation of the wise and good wherever they shall reach the human ear.

Nor is it only in this instance that nature has "thus outwitted us" for her own wise and salutary purposes. By a mode of reasoning analogous to that of Wollaston, it would be easy to turn most, if not all, our active principles into ridicule. But what should we gain by the attempt, but a ludicrous exposition of that moral constitution which it has pleased our Maker to give us, and which, the more we study it, will be found to abound the more with marks of wise and beneficent design?

It is fortunate, in such cases, that, although the reasonings of the metaphysician may puzzle the understanding, they produce very little effect on the conduct. He may tell us, for example, that the admiration of female beauty is absurd, because *beauty*, as well as *color*, is a quality not existing in the object, but in the mind of the spectator; or, (which brings the case still nearer to that under our consideration) he may allege that the whole charm of the finest countenance would vanish if it were examined with the aid of a microscope. In all such cases, as well as in the instance referred to by Wollaston, we are determined very powerfully by nature; in a way, indeed, that our reason cannot explain, but which we never fail to find subservient to valuable ends. For I am far from thinking that it would be of advantage to mankind if Wollaston's views were generally adopted. That the love of glory has sometimes covered the earth with desolation and bloodshed I am ready to grant; but the actions to which it generally prompts are highly serviceable to the world. Indeed it is only by such actions that an enviable fame is to be acquired.

A strong conviction of this truth has led Dr. Akenside to express himself in one of his odes with a warmth

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ida."—*Cic. Tusc.* iii. Cap. 2.

which passes perhaps the bounds of strict propriety, but for which a sufficient apology may be found in the poetical enthusiasm by which it was inspired. The ode is said to have been occasioned by a sermon against the love of glory.

"Come then, tell me, sage divine,
Is it an offence to own
That our bosoms e'er incline
Toward immortal Glory's throne?
For with me, nor pomp nor pleasure,
Bourbon's might, Braganza's treasure,
So can fancy's dream rejoice,
So conciliate reason's choice,
As one approving word of her impartial voice.

"If to spurn at noble praise
Be the passport to thy heaven,
Follow thou those gloomy ways;
No such law to me was given:
Nor I trust shall I deplore me
Faring like my friends before me;
Nor a holier place desire
Than Timoleon's arms acquire,
And Tully's curule chair, and Milton's golden lyre."

Having mentioned the name of Milton, I cannot forbear to add, that *he too* has called the love of fame *an infirmity*, although he has qualified this implied censure by calling it *the infirmity of a noble mind.* He has distinctly acknowledged, at the same time, the heroic sacrifices of ease and pleasure to which it has prompted the most distinguished benefactors of the human race.

"Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
(The last infirmity of noble minds)
To scorn delights and live laborious days."

I must not dismiss this subject without taking some notice of a theory started by Mr. Hume with respect to the origin of the love of praise: a theory which applies to this passion even when it has for its object the praise of our contemporaries. "Of all opinions," he observes, "those which we form in our own favor, however lofty and presuming, are at bottom the frailest, and the most easily shaken by the contradiction and opposition of others. Our great concern in this case makes us soon alarmed, and keeps our passions upon the watch;

our conciousness of partiality still makes us dread a mistake; and the very difficulty of judging concerning an object which is never set at a due distance from us, nor is seen in a proper point of view, makes us hearken anxiously to the opinion of others who are better qualified to form opinions concerning us. Hence that strong love of fame with which all mankind are possessed. It is in order to fix and confirm their favorable opinion of themselves, *not from any original passion*, that they seek the applause of others." *

I think it cannot be doubted that the circumstance here mentioned by Mr. Hume adds greatly to the pleasure we derive from the possession of esteem; but it sufficiently appears from the facts already stated, particularly from the early period of life at which this principle makes its appearance, that there is a satisfaction arising from the possession of esteem perfectly unconnected with the cause referred to by this author. Mr. Hume has therefore mistaken a concomitant effect for the cause of the phenomenon in question.

In remarking, however, this concomitant effect, he must be allowed to have called our attention to a fact of some importance in the philosophy of the human mind, and which ought not to be overlooked in analyzing the compounded sentiment of satisfaction we derive from the good opinion of others. Nor is this the only accessory circumstance that enhances the pleasure resulting from the gratification of the original principle. If in those cases where we are somewhat doubtful of the propriety of our own conduct we are anxious to have in our favor the sanction of public opinion,—so, on the other hand, when we are satisfied in our own minds that our conduct has been right, *part* of the pleasure we receive from esteem arises from observing the just views and candid dispositions of others. Nor is it less indisputable, on the contrary supposition, that when, in consequence of calumny and misrepresentation, we fail in obtaining that esteem to which we know ourselves to be entitled, our disappointment at missing our just re-

* Dissertation on the Passions—Essays, Vol. I. p. 202.

ward is aggravated, to a wonderful degree, by our sorrow for the injustice and ingratitude of mankind. Still, however, it must be remembered that these are only *accessory* circumstances, and that there is a pleasure resulting from the possession of esteem which is not resolvable into either of them, and which appears to be an ultimate fact in the constitution of our nature.

From the passage formerly quoted from Wollaston it appears that he apprehended the love of fame to be justifiable only in *two* cases. The one is, when we desire it as a confirmation of the rectitude of our own judgments; the other, when the possession of it can be attended with some real and solid good. But why, I must again repeat, offer any apology for our obeying a natural principle of our constitution, so long as we preserve it under due regulation?

It is not unworthy of remark, that this principle is one of those with which our fellow creatures are most disposed to sympathize. With what indignation do we hear the slightest reflection cast on the memory of one who was dear to us, and how sacred do we feel the duty of coming forward in his defence? Nor is this sympathy confined to the circle of our own acquaintance. It embraces the wise and good of the most remote ages, and prompts us irresistibly to protect their fame from the assaults of envy and detraction. Whatever theory philosophers may adopt as to the origin of this sympathy, its utility in preserving immaculate the reputation of those ornaments of humanity whom mankind look up to as models for imitation is equally indisputable.

I have already said that the desire of esteem is, on the whole, a useful principle of action; for, although there are many cases in which the public opinion is erroneous and corrupted, there are many more in which it is agreeable to reason, and favorable to the interests of virtue and of mankind. The habits, therefore, which this principle of action has a tendency to form are likely, in most instances, to coincide with those which are recommended by a sense of duty. In many men, accordingly, who are very little influenced by higher principles, a regard to the opinion of the world, (or, as we

commonly express it, a regard to character) produces a conduct honorable to themselves and beneficial to society.*

To this observation it may be added, that the habits to which we are trained by the desire of esteem render the acquisition of virtuous habits more easy. The desire of esteem operates in children before they have a capacity to distinguish right from wrong; or at least the former principle of action is much more powerful *in their case* than the latter. Hence it furnishes a most useful and effectual engine in the business of education, more particularly by training us early to exertions of self-command and self-denial. It teaches us, for example, to restrain our appetites within those bounds which decency prescribes, and thus forms us to habits of moderation and temperance. And although our conduct cannot be denominated virtuous so long as a regard to the opinion of others is our only motive, yet the habits we thus acquire in infancy and childhood render it more easy for us to subject our passions to the authority of reason and conscience as we advance to maturity. "In that young man," said Sylla, speaking of Cæsar, "who walks the streets with so little regard to modesty, I foresee many Marius's." His idea probably was, that on a temper so completely divested of sympathy with the feelings of others, society could lay little hold, and that whatever principle of action should happen to gain the ascendant in his mind was likely to sacrifice to its own gratification the restraints both of honor and of duty.

These, and some other considerations of the same kind, have struck Mr. Smith so forcibly that he has been led to resolve our sense of duty into a regard to the good opinion, and a desire to obtain the *sympathy* of our fellow creatures. I shall afterwards have occasion to examine the principal arguments he alleges in support of his conclusions. At present I shall only remark,

* "Gloria enim solida quædam res et expressa, non adumbrata; ea est consentiens bus bonorum, incorrupta vox bene judicantium de excellente virtute. Ea virtuti resonat tamquam imago, quæ quia recte factorum *plerumque* comes est, non est bonis viris repudianda."—*Cic. Tusc.* iii. Cap. 2.

that, although his theory may account for the desire which all men, both good and bad, have to *assume the appearance of virtue*, it never can explain the origin of our notions of duty and of moral obligation. One striking proof of this is, that the love of fame can only be completely gratified by the *actual* possession of those qualities for which we wish to be esteemed; and that, when we receive praises which we know we do not deserve, we are conscious of a sort of fraud or imposition on the world.

> "All fame is foreign but of true desert,
> Plays round the head, but comes not to the heart."

In further confirmation of the same doctrine it may be observed, that, although the desire of esteem is often an useful auxiliary to our sense of duty, and although, in most of our good actions, the two principles are perhaps more or less blended together, yet the merit of virtuous conduct is always enhanced, in the opinion of mankind, when it is discovered in the more private situations of life, where the individual cannot be suspected of any views to the applauses of the world. Even Cicero, in whose mind vanity had at least its due sway, has borne testimony to this truth. "Mihi quidem laudabiliora videntur omnia, quæ sine venditatione et sine populo teste fiunt: non quo fugiendus sit (omnia enim benefacta in luce se collocari volunt) sed tamen nullum theatrum virtuti conscientiâ majus est." * So far, therefore, are the desire of esteem and the sense of duty from being radically the same principle of action, that the former is only an *auxiliary* to the latter, and is always understood to diminish the merit of the agent in proportion to the influence it had over his determinations.

An additional proof of this may be derived from the miserable effects produced on the conduct by the desire of fame, when it is the *sole*, or even the *governing*, principle of our actions. In this case, indeed, it seldom

* Tusc. Disp. Lib. xi. Cap. 26. The same remark is made by Pliny in one of his epistles, where it is illustrated by one of the most beautiful anecdotes recorded in the annals of our species. See note (B.) at the end of this volume.

fails to disappoint its own purposes, for a lasting fame is scarcely to be acquired without a steady and consistent conduct, and such a conduct can only arise from a conscientious regard to the suggestions of our own breasts. The pleasure, therefore, which a being capable of reflection derives from the possession of fame, so far from being the original motive to worthy actions, presupposes the existence of other and of nobler motives in the mind.*

Nor is this all; when a competition happens between the desire of fame, and a regard to duty, if we sacrifice the latter to the former we are filled with remorse and self-condemnation, and the applauses of the world afford us but an empty and unsatisfactory recompense; whereas a steady adherence to the right, even although it should accidentally expose us to calumny, never fails to be its own reward. Whether, therefore, we regard our lasting happiness, or our lasting fame, the precept of Cicero is equally deserving of our attention.

"Neither make it your study to secure the applauses of the vulgar, nor rest your hopes of happiness on rewards which men can bestow. Let virtue, by her own native attractions, allure you in the paths of honor. What others may say of you is *their* concern, not *yours;* nor is it worth your while to be out of humor for the topics which your conduct may supply for their conversation."—"Neque sermonibus vulgi dederis te, nec in præmiis humanis spem posueris rerum tuarum; suis te oportet illecebris *ipsa virtus* trahat ad verum decus. Quid de te alii loquantur ipsi videant, sed loquentur tamen." †

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* What the Roman poet has so finely said of the *regulated influence* which the love of literary applause had on his own mind ought to be the language of every man, into whatever walk of ambition his fortune may have thrown him.

"Non ego, cum scribo, si forte quid aptius exit,
(Quando hæc rara avis est) si quid tamen aptius exit,
Laudari metuam; neque enim mihi cornea fibra est:
Sed recti finemque extremumque esse recuso
EUGE tuum et BELLE."

PERSIUS, *Sat.* I. l. 45.

I need scarcely remind my readers that these are the words of the same writer, who has in other parts of his works (and I think in perfect consistency with the sentiment expressed in the foregoing lines) inculcated the severest precepts of the stoical school.

"Non, si quid turbida Roma
Elevet, accedas, examenve improbum in illâ
Castiges trutinâ: NEC TE QUÆSIVERIS EXTRA."

Ibid. l. 5.

† Somn. Scip. Cap. vii.

SECTION IV.

The Desire of Power.

The manner in which the idea of Power is at first introduced into the mind has been long a perplexing subject of speculation to metaphysicians, and has given rise to some of the most subtile disquisitions of the human understanding. But although it be difficult to explain its origin, the idea itself is familiar to the most illiterate, even at the earliest period of life; and the desire of possessing the corresponding object seems to be one of the strongest principles of human conduct.

In general, it may be observed, that, wherever we are led to consider ourselves as the authors of any effect, we feel a sensible pride or exultation in the consciousness of *power*, and the pleasure is in general proportioned to the greatness of the effect, compared with the smallness of our exertion.

What is commonly called the pleasure of activity is in truth the pleasure of *power*. Mere exercise, which produces no sensible effect, is attended with no enjoyment, or a very slight one. The enjoyment, such as it is, is only corporeal.

The infant, while still on the breast, delights in exerting its little strength on every object it meets with, and is mortified when any accident convinces it of its own imbecility. The pastimes of the boy are almost, without exception, such as suggest to him the idea of his *power*. When he throws a stone, or shoots an arrow, he is pleased with being able to produce an effect at a distance from himself; and, while he measures with his eye the amplitude or range of his missile weapon, contemplates with satisfaction the extent to which his power has reached. It is on a similar principle that he loves to bring his strength into comparison with that of his fellows, and to enjoy the consciousness of superior prowess. Nor need we search in the *malevolent* dispositions of our nature for any other motive to the apparent acts of cruelty which he sometimes exercises

over the inferior animals,—the sufferings of the animal, in such cases, either entirely escaping his notice, or being overlooked in that state of pleasurable triumph which the wanton abuse of *power* communicates to a weak and unreflecting judgment. The active sports of the youth captivate his fancy by suggesting similar ideas,—of strength of body, or force of mind, of contempt of hardship and of danger. And accordingly such are the occupations in which Virgil, with a characteristical propriety, employs his young Ascanius.

> "At puer Ascanius mediis in vallibus acri
> Gaudet equo; jamque hos cursu, jam præterit illos;
> Spumantemque dari pecora inter inertia votis
> Optat aprum, aut fulvum descendere monte leonem."

As we advance in years, and as our animal powers lose their activity and vigor, we gradually aim at extending our influence over others by the superiority of fortune and station, or by the still more flattering superiority of intellectual endowments, by the force of our understanding, by the extent of our information, by the arts of persuasion, or the accomplishments of address. What but the idea of power pleases the orator in managing the reins of an assembled multitude, when he silences the reason of others by superior ingenuity, bends to his purposes their desires and passions, and, without the aid of force, or the splendor of rank, becomes the arbiter of the fate of nations!

To the same principle we may trace, in part, the pleasure arising from the discovery of general theorems in the sciences. Every such discovery puts us in possession of innumerable particular truths or particular facts, and gives us a ready command of a great stock of knowledge, of which we could not, with equal ease, avail ourselves before. It increases, in a word, our *intellectual power* in a way very analogous to that in which a machine or engine increases the mechanical power of the human body.

The discoveries we make in natural philosophy have, beside this effect, a tendency to enlarge the sphere of our power over the material universe; first, by enabling us to accommodate our conduct to the established

course of physical events; and secondly, by enabling us to call to our aid many natural powers or agents as instruments for the accomplishment of our purposes.

In general every discovery we make with respect to the laws of nature, either in the material or moral worlds, is an accession of power to the human mind, inasmuch as it lays the foundation of prudent and effectual conduct in circumstances where, without the same means of information, the success of our proceedings must have depended on chance alone. The *desire of power*, therefore, comes in the progress of reason and experience, to act as an auxiliary to our instinctive *desire of knowledge;* and it is with a view to strengthen and confirm this alliance that Bacon so often repeats his favorite maxim, that *knowledge* and *power* are synonymous or identical terms.

The idea of power is, *partly* at least, the foundation of our attachment to *property*. It is not enough for us to have the *use* of an object. We desire to have it completely at our own disposal, without being responsible to any person whatsoever for the purposes to which we may choose to turn it. "There is an unspeakable pleasure," says Addison, "in calling any thing one's own. A freehold, though it be but in ice and snow, will make the owner pleased in the possession, and stout in the defence of it."

Avarice is a particular modification of the *desire of power*, arising from the various functions of *money* in a commercial country. Its influence as an active principle is greatly strengthened by habit and association, insomuch that the original desire of power is frequently lost in the acquired propensities to which it gives birth; the possession of *money* becoming, in process of time, an ultimate object of pursuit, and continuing to stimulate the activity of the mind after it has lost a relish for every other species of exertion.*

The love of liberty proceeds in part, if not wholly,

* Berkeley in his Querist has started the same idea.

"Whether the real end and aim of men be not *power?* and whether he who could have every thing else at his wish or will would value *money?*"

To this query the good bishop has subjoined another, which one would hardly

from the same source; from a desire of being able to do whatever is agreeable to our own inclination. Slavery mortifies us because it limits our power.

Even the love of tranquillity and retirement has been resolved by Cicero into the desire of power. "Multi autem et sunt et fuerunt, qui eam, quam dico, tranquillitatem expetentes, a negotiis publicis se removerint, ad otiumque perfugerint. His idem propositum fuit quod regibus, ut ne quâ re egerent, ne cui parerent, libertate uterentur; cujus proprium est sic vivere ut velis. Quare, cum hoc commune sit potentiæ cupidorum cum iis quos dixi otiosis; alteri se adipisci id posse arbitrantur, si opes magnas habeant, alteri, si contenti sint et suo, et parvo." *

The idea of power is also, *in some degree*, the foundation of *the pleasure of virtue*. We love to be at liberty to follow our own inclinations, without being subject to the control of a superior; but even this is not sufficient to our happiness. When we are led by vicious habits, or by the force of passion, to do what reason disapproves, we are sensible of a mortifying subjection to the inferior principles of our nature, and feel our own littleness and weakness. On the other hand, *he that ruleth his spirit* feels himself *greater than he that taketh a city*. "It is pleasant," says Dr. Tillotson, "to be virtuous and good, because *that* is to excel many others. It is pleasant to grow better, because *that* is to excel ourselves. It is pleasant to mortify and subdue our appetites, because *that* is victory. It is pleasant to command our passions, and keep them within the bounds of reason, because this is empire."

From the observations now made, it appears that the desire of power is subservient to important purposes in our constitution, and is one of the principal sources both of our intellectual and moral improvements. An examination of the effects which it produces on society would

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have expected from a writer so zealously attached to tory and high church principles.

"Whether the public aim in every well governed state be not, that each member, according to his just pretensions and industry, should have POWER?"

"Naturam expellas furcâ, tamen usque recurret."

* De Off. Lib. I. Cap. 20 et 21.

open views very strikingly illustrative of benevolent intention in the Author of our frame. I shall content myself, however, with remarking, that the general aspect of *the fact* affords a very favorable view of human nature. When we consider how much *more* every man has it in his power to *injure* others than to promote their interests, it must appear manifest that society could not possibly subsist unless the benevolent affections had a very decided predominance over those principles which give rise to competition and enmity. Whoever reflects duly on this consideration, will, if I do not deceive myself, be inclined to form conclusions concerning the dispositions of his fellow creatures very different from the representations of them to be found in the writings of some gloomy and misanthropical moralists.

SECTION V.

Emulation, or the Desire of Superiority.

This principle of action is classed by Dr. Reid with the affections, and is considered by him as a *malevolent affection*.* He tells us, however, that he does not mean by this epithet to insinuate that there is any thing *criminal* in emulation any more than in resentment when excited by an injury; but he thinks that it involves a sentiment of ill will to our rival, and makes use of the word *malevolent* to express this sentiment, as the language affords no softer epithet to convey the idea.

I own it appears to me that emulation, considered as a principle of action, ought to be classed with the *desires*, and not with the *affections*. It is indeed frequently accompanied with a *malevolent* affection; but it is the desire of *superiority* which is the *active* principle, and the affection is only a concomitant circumstance.

I do not even think that this malevolent affection is a *necessary* concomitant of the desire of superiority. It is possible, surely, to conceive (although the case may happen but rarely) that emulation may take place be-

* Essays on the Active Powers, pp. 166, 167. 4to Ed.

tween men who are united by the most cordial friendship, and without a single sentiment of ill will disturbing their harmony.

When emulation is accompanied with malevolent affection it assumes the name of *envy*. The distinction between these two principles of action is accurately stated by Dr. Butler. "Emulation is merely the desire of superiority over others, with whom we compare ourselves. To desire the attainment of this superiority by the particular means of others being brought down below our own level is the distinct notion of *envy*. From whence it is easy to see, that the real end which the natural passion emulation, and which the unlawful one envy, aims at is exactly the same; and consequently, that to do mischief is not the end of envy, but merely the means it makes use of to attain its end." * Dr. Reid himself seems to have clearly perceived the distinction, although in other parts of the same section he has lost sight of it again. "He who runs a race," says he, "feels uneasiness at seeing another outstrip him. This is uncorrupted nature, and the work of God within him. But this uneasiness may produce either of two very different effects. It may incite him to make more vigorous exertions, and to strain every nerve to get before his rival. This is fair and honest emulation. This is the effect it is intended to produce. But if he has not fairness and candor of heart, he will look with an evil eye on his competitor, and will endeavour to trip him, or to throw a stumbling block in his way. This is pure envy, the most malignant passion that can lodge in the human breast, which devours, as its natural food, the fame and the happiness of those who are most deserving of our esteem." †

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* Sermon I. on Human Nature.

† Reid on the Active Powers, p. 170. Dr. Beattie, in his Elements of Moral Science, after stating very correctly the speculative distinction between emulation and envy, observes with great truth, that it is extremely difficult to preserve the former wholly unmixed with the latter, and that emulation, though entirely different from envy, is very apt, through the weakness of our nature, to degenerate into it. To this remark he subjoins the following very striking practical reflection. "Let the man," says he, "who thinks he is actuated by generous emulation only, and wishes to know whether there be any thing of envy in the case, examine his own heart, and ask himself whether his friends on becoming, though in an honorable way, his competitors, have less of his affection than they had before; whether he be gratified by hearing

In quoting these passages, I would not be understood to represent this distinction between emulation and envy as a novelty in the science of ethics; for the very same distinction was long ago stated with admirable conciseness and justness by Aristotle; whose *definitions*, (I shall take this opportunity of remarking by the way) however censurable they may frequently be when they relate to *physical* subjects, are, in most instances, peculiarly happy when they relate to *moral* ideas. "Æmulatio bonum quiddam est, et bonis viris convenit; at invidere improbum est, et hominum improborum; nam æmulans talem efficere se studet, ut ipsa bona quoque nanciscatur; at invidens studet efficere, ut ne alter boni quid habeat." *

Among the lower animals we see many symptoms of emulation, but in *them* its effects are perfectly insignificant when compared with those it produces on human conduct. Their emulation is chiefly confined to swiftness,† strength, or favor with their females. I think, too, among *dogs* we may perceive something like jealousy or rivalship in courting the favor of man. In our own race emulation operates in an infinite variety of directions, and is one of the principal sources of human improvement.

Before leaving the subject, I think it of consequence again to repeat, that, notwithstanding the speculative distinction I have been endeavouring to make between emulation and envy, the former disposition is so seldom altogether unmixed with the latter, that men who are conscious of possessing original powers of thinking can scarcely be at too much pains to draw a veil over their

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them depreciated; whether he would wish their merit less, that he might the more easily equal or excel them; and whether he would have a more sincere regard for them if the world were to acknowledge him their superior? If his heart answer all or any of these questions in the affirmative, it is time to look out for a cure, for the symptoms of envy are but too apparent."

* Ἐπιεικὲς ἐστιν ὁ ζῆλος, καὶ ἐπιεικῶν· τὸ δὲ φθονεῖν φαῦλον, καὶ φαύλων· ὁ μὲν γὰρ αὑτὸν παρασκευάζει διὰ τὸν ζῆλον τυγχάνειν τῶν ἀγαθῶν· ὁ δὲ τὸν πλησίον μὴ ἔχειν διὰ τὸν φθονόν· &c. &c. Aristot. Rhetor. Lib. ii. Cap. 11. The whole chapter is excellent. I have adopted in the text the Latin version of Buhle. See the Bipontian Edition of Aristotle.

† One of the most remarkable instances of this that I have read of is the emulation of the race horses at Rome when run without riders. This emulation is even said to be inspirited by the concourse of spectators.—See observations made in a Tour to Italy, by the celebrated M. de la Condamine.

claims to originality, if they wish to employ their talents to the best advantage in the service of mankind.

> "Men must be taught as if you taught them not,
> And things unknown propos'd as things forgot." *

In the observations which I have hitherto made upon emulation, I have proceeded on the supposition, that the subject of competition is the personal qualities of the individual. These, however, are not the great objects of ambition with the bulk of mankind, nor perhaps do they occasion jealousies and enmities so fatal to our morals and our happiness, as those which are occasioned by the seemingly partial and unjust distribution of the goods of fortune. To see the natural rewards of industry and genius fall to the share of the weak and the profligate can scarcely fail to excite a regret in the best regulated tempers; and to those who are disposed (as every man perhaps is in some degree) to overrate their own pretensions, and to undervalue those of their neighbours, this regret is a source of discontent and misery, which no measure of external prosperity is sufficient to remove. The feeling, when it does not lead to any act of injustice or dishonor, is so intimately connected with our sense of merit and demerit, that many allowances for it will be made by those who reflect candidly on the common infirmities of humanity; and much indulgence is due from the prosperous to their less fortunate rivals. So much indeed is this indulgence recommended to us by all the best principles of our nature, and so painful is the reflection that we are even the innocent cause of disquiet to others, that it may be doubted whether the constraint and embarrassment produced by great and sudden accessions of prosperity be not more than sufficient to counterbalance any solid addition they are likely to bring to our own happiness.†

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* Pope's Essay on Criticism.

† See an admirable passage in Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments, (Vol. I. p. 94. *et seq.* Sixth edition.) "The man who, by some sudden revolution of fortune, is lifted up all at once," &c. &c.

In Bacon's Essays there is an article on *Envy*, abounding with original, and, in the main, just reflections. Even those which are somewhat questionable may be useful in suggesting materials of thought to others.

Human life has been often likened to a race, and the parallel holds, not only in the general resemblance, but in many of the minuter circumstances. When the horses first start from the barrier how easy and sportive are their sallies,—sometimes one taking the lead, sometimes another! If they happen to run abreast, their contiguity seems only the effect of the social instinct. In proportion, however, as they advance in their career, the spirit of emulation becomes gradually more apparent, till at length, as they draw near to the goal, every sinew and every nerve is strained to the utmost, and it is well if the competition closes without some suspicion of jostling and foul play on the part of the winner.

How exact and melancholy a picture of the race of ambition; of the insensible and almost inevitable effect of political rivalship in extinguishing early friendships; and of the increasing eagerness with which men continue to grasp at the palm of victory till the fatal moment arrives when it is to drop from their hands for ever!

As we have artificial *appetites* so we have also artificial *desires*. Whatever conduces to the attainment of any object of natural desire is itself desired on account of its subservience to this end, and frequently comes in process of time to be regarded as valuable in itself, independent of this subservience. It is thus (as we formerly observed) that wealth becomes with many an ultimate object of desire, although it is undoubtedly valued at first merely on account of its subservience to the attainment of other objects. In like manner we are led to desire dress, equipage, retinue, furniture, on account of the estimation in which they are supposed to be held by the public. Dr. Hutcheson calls such desires *secondary* desires, and accounts for their origin in the way I have now mentioned. "Since we are capable," says he, "of reflection, memory, observation, and reasoning about the distant tendencies of objects and actions, and not confined to things present, there must arise, in consequence of our original desires, *secondary* desires of *every thing* imagined to be useful to gratify any of the

primary desires, and that with strength proportioned to the several original desires, and the imagined usefulness or necessity of the advantageous object."—"Thus," he continues, "as soon as we come to apprehend the use of wealth or power to gratify any of our original desires we must also desire them. Hence arises the universality of the desire of *wealth and power*, since they are the means of gratifying all other desires." The only thing exceptionable in the foregoing passage is, that the author classes the desire of power with that of wealth; whereas I apprehend it to be clear, according to Hutcheson's own definition, that the former is a primary desire, and the latter a secondary one. Avarice, indeed, (as I already remarked) is but a particular modification of the desire of power generated by the conventional value which attaches to money in the progress of society, in consequence of which it becomes the immediate and the habitual object of pursuit in all the various departments of professional industry.

The author also of the preliminary dissertation prefixed to King's *Origin of Evil* attempts to explain, by means of the association of ideas, the origin not only of avarice, but of the desire of knowledge, and of the desire of fame, both of which I have endeavoured to show, in the preceding pages, are justly entitled to rank with the primary and most simple elements of our active constitution. That they, as well as all the other original principles of our nature, are very powerfully influenced by association and habit, is a point about which there can be no dispute; and hence arises the plausibility of those theories which would represent them as wholly factitious.*

* Dr. Hartley's once celebrated work entitled "Observations on Man," in which he has pushed the theory of association to so extravagant a length, and which, not many years ago, found so many enthusiastic admirers in England, seems to have owed its existence to the Dissertation here referred to.

"The work here offered to the public," he tells us himself in his preface, "consists of papers written at different times, but taking their rise from the following occasion.

"About eighteen years ago I was informed that the Rev. Mr. Gay, then living, asserted the possibility of deducing all our intellectual pleasures and pains from association. This put me upon considering the power of association. Mr. Gay published his sentiments on this matter, about the same time, in a Dissertation on the Fundamental Principle of Virtue, prefixed to Mr. Archdeacon Law's Translation of Archbishop King's Origin of Evil."

CHAPTER THIRD.

OF OUR AFFECTIONS.

SECTION I.

General Observations.

UNDER this title are comprehended all those active principles whose direct and ultimate object is the communication either of enjoyment or of suffering to any of our fellow creatures. According to this definition, which has been adopted by some eminent writers, and among others by Dr. Reid, resentment, revenge, hatred, belong to the class of our affections as well as gratitude or pity. Hence a distinction of the affections into benevolent and malevolent. I shall afterwards mention some considerations which lead me to think that the distinction requires some limitations in the statement.

Our benevolent affections are various, and it would not perhaps be easy to enumerate them completely. The parental and filial affections—the affections of kindred—love—friendship—patriotism—universal benevolence—gratitude—pity to the distressed, are some of the most important. Besides these there are peculiar benevolent affections excited by those moral qualities in other men, which render them either amiable or respectable, or objects of admiration.

In the foregoing enumeration, it is not to be understood that all the benevolent affections particularly specified are stated as original principles, or ultimate facts in our constitution. On the contrary, there can be little doubt that several of them may be analyzed into the same general principle differently modified, according to the circumstances in which it operates. This, however, (notwithstanding the stress which has been some-

times laid upon it) is chiefly a question of arrangement. Whether we suppose these principles to be all ultimate facts, or some of them to be resolvable into other facts, more general, they are equally to be regarded as constituent parts of human nature, and, upon either supposition, we have equal reason to admire the wisdom with which that nature is adapted to the situation in which it is placed. The laws which regulate the acquired perceptions of sight are surely as much a part of our frame as those which regulate any of our original perceptions; and although they require for their developement a certain degree of experience and observation in the individual, the uniformity of the result shows that there is nothing arbitrary or accidental in their origin.

The question, indeed, concerning the origin of our different affections, leads to some curious disquisitions, but is of very subordinate importance to those inquiries which relate to their nature and laws and uses. In many philosophical systems, however, it seems to have been considered as the most interesting subject of discussion connected with this part of the human constitution.

Before we proceed to consider any of our benevolent affections in detail, I shall make a few observations on two circumstances in which they all agree. In the *first place*, they are all accompanied with an agreeable feeling; and, *secondly*, they imply a desire of happiness or of good to their respective objects.*

I. That the exercise of all our kind affections is accompanied with an agreeable feeling will not be questioned. Next to a good conscience it constitutes the principal part of human happiness. With what satisfaction do we submit to fatigue and danger in the service of those we love, and how many cares do even the most selfish voluntarily bring on themselves by their attachment to others! So much indeed of our happiness is derived from this source, that those authors whose object is to furnish *amusement* to the mind avail themselves of these affections as one of the chief vehicles

* See Reid on the Active Powers, p. 144. 4to Edition.

of pleasure. Hence the principal charm of *tragedy* and of every other species of pathetic composition. How far it is of use to separate in this manner "the *luxury of pity*" from the opportunities of active exertion may perhaps be doubted. *My own* opinion on this question I have stated at some length in the Philosophy of the Human Mind.†

Without entering, however, in this place into the argument I have there endeavoured to support, I shall only remark at present, that the pleasures of kind affection are by no means confined (as men of loose principles are too apt to flatter themselves) to the virtuous part of our species. They mingle also with our criminal indulgences, and often mislead the young and thoughtless by the charms they impart to vice and folly. It is indeed from this very quarter that the chief dangers to morals are to be apprehended in early life; and it is a melancholy consideration to add, that these dangers are not a little increased by the amiable and attractive qualities by which nature often distinguishes those unfortunate men who would seem, on a superficial view, to be her peculiar favorites.

Nor is it only when the kind affections meet with circumstances favorable to their operation that the exercise of them is a source of enjoyment. Contrary to the analogy of most, if not of all, our other active principles, there is a degree of pleasure mixed with the pain even in those cases in which they are disappointed in the attainment of their object. Nay, in such cases it often happens that the pleasure predominates so far over the pain as to produce a mixed emotion, on which a wounded heart loves to dwell. When death, for example, has deprived us of the society of a friend, we derive some consolation for our loss from the recollection of his virtues, which awakens in our mind all those kind affections which the sight of him used to inspire; and in such a situation the indulgence of these affections is preferred not only to every lighter amusement, but to every other social pleasure. *Heu quanto minus est cum*

† Vol. I. Chap. vii. Section v.

reliquis versari quam tui meminisse! The final cause of the agreeable emotion connected with the exercise of benevolence in all its various modes was evidently to induce us to cultivate with peculiar care a class of our active principles so immediately subservient to the happiness of society.*

II. All our benevolent affections imply a desire of happiness to their respective objects. Indeed it is from this circumstance they derive their name.

The philosophers who have endeavoured to resolve our appetites and desires into self-love have given a similar account of our benevolent affections. It is evident that this amounts to a denial of their existence as a separate class of active principles; for when a thing is desired not on its own account, but as instrumental to the attainment of something else, it is not the desire of the *means*, but that of the *end*, which is in this case the principle of action.

In the course of my observations on the different affections, when I come to consider them particularly, I shall endeavour to show that this account of their origin is extremely wide of the truth. In the meantime it may be worth while to remark in general, how strongly it is opposed by the analogy of the other active powers already examined. We have found that the preservation of the individual and the continuation of the species are not intrusted to self-love and reason alone, but that we are endowed with various appetites which, without any reflection on our part, impel us to their respective objects. We have also found, with respect to the acquisition of knowledge (on which the perfection of the individual and the improvement of the species essentially depend,) that it is not intrusted solely to self-love and benevolence, but that we are prompted to it by the implanted principle of curiosity. It further appeared,

* See Lucan's picturesque and pathetic description of the behaviour of Cornelia when she retired to the hold of the ship to indulge her grief in solitude and darkness after the murder of Pompey.

"Caput ferali obduxit amictu,
Decrevitque pati tenebras, puppisque cavernis
Delituit; *sævumque arctè complexa dolorem*
Perfruitur lacrymis, et amat pro conjuge luctum," &c. &c.
Pharsalia, Lib. ix. v. 109.

that, in addition to our sense of duty, another incentive to worthy conduct is provided in the desire of esteem, which is not only one of our most powerful principles of action, but continues to operate in full force to the last moment of our being. Now, as men were plainly intended to live in society, and as the social union could not subsist without a mutual interchange of good offices, would it not be reasonable to expect, agreeably to the analogy of our nature, that so important an end would not be intrusted solely to the slow deductions of reason, or to the metaphysical refinements of self-love, but that some provision would be made for it, in a particular class of active principles, which might operate, like our appetites and desires, independently of our reflection? To say this of parental affection or of pity is saying nothing more in their favor than what was affirmed of hunger and thirst, that they prompt us to particular objects without any reference to our own enjoyment.

I have not offered these objections to the selfish theory with any view of exalting our natural affections into *virtues;* for, in so far as they arise from original constitution, they confer no merit whatever on the individual any more than his appetites or desires:—at the same time (as Dr. Reid has observed) there is a manifest gradation in the sentiments of respect with which we regard these different constituents of character.

Our *desires* (it was formerly observed) although not virtuous in themselves, are manly and respectable, and plainly of greater dignity than our animal appetites. In like manner it may he remarked that our benevolent affections, although not *meritorious,* are highly *amiable.* A want of attention to the essential difference between the ideas expressed by these two words has given rise to much confusion in different systems of Moral Philosophy, more particularly in the systems of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson.

As it would lead me into too minute a detail to consider our different benevolent affections separately, I shall confine myself to a few detached remarks on some of the most important.

The *first* place is undoubtedly due to what we com-

monly call *natural affection*, including under the term the affections of parents and children, and those of other near relations.

SECTION II.

Of the Affections of Kindred.

THE parental affection is common to us with most of the brutes, although with them it is variously modified according to their respective natures, and according as the care of the parent is more or less necessary for the preservation and nurture of the young. Cicero remarks that this is no more than might have been expected from that beneficent providence everywhere conspicuous in nature. "Hæc inter se congruere non possunt, ut natura et procreari vellet et diligi procreatos non curaret." *—"Commune animantium omnium est conjunctionis appetitus, et cura quædam eorum quæ procreata sunt." †

When I ascribe parental affection to our own species, I do not mean to insinuate that there is any foundation for those stories which poets have feigned of particular discriminating feelings which have enabled parents and children, after a long absence, or when they have never met before, mutually to recognise each other. The parental affection takes its rise from a *knowledge* of the relation in which the parties stand, and it is very powerfully confirmed by *habit*. All that I assert is, that it results naturally from that knowledge, and from the habits superinduced by the relation which the parties bear to each other; in which sense it may be justly said, (to adopt a beautiful and philosophical expression of Dr. Ferguson's) that "natural affection springs up in the soul as the milk springs in the breast of the mother." ‡ Accordingly, it operates, in a great measure, independently of reflection and of a sense of duty. Reason, indeed, might satisfy a man that his children

* De Finibus, 3. † De Offic. I. 4.
‡ Principles of Moral and Political Science, Vol. I. p. 31.

are particularly intrusted to his care, and that it is his duty to rear and educate them; as reason might have induced him to eat and drink without the appetites of hunger and thirst; but reason cannot create an affection any more than an appetite: and considering how little the conduct of mankind is in general influenced by a sense of duty, there are good grounds for thinking, that, were not reason in this case aided by a very powerful implanted principle, a very small proportion out of the whole number of children brought into the world would arrive at maturity.

How much this affection depends upon *habit* appears from this, that, when the care of a child is devolved upon one who is not its parent, the parental affection is, in a great measure, transferred along with it. "This," as Dr. Reid observes, "is plainly the work of nature, and is an additional provision made by her for the continuation and preservation of the species."

The parental affection, as we have hitherto considered it, is common to both sexes; but it cannot, I think, be denied, that it is in the heart of *the mother* that it exists in the most perfect strength and beauty. Indeed I do not think that those have gone too far who have pronounced "*the heart of a good mother to be the master piece of nature's works.*" * There is no form, certainly, in which humanity appears so lovely, or presents so fair a copy of the Divine image after which it was made.

Nor are these affections of parent and child useful solely for the preservation of the race. They form the heart in infancy for its more extensive social duties, and gradually prepare it for those affections which constitute the character of the good citizen; not to mention that, in every period of life, it is our private attachments which furnish the most powerful of all incentives to patriotism and heroic virtue. Nothing, therefore, could be more unphilosophical than the opinion of Plato, that the indulgence of the domestic charities unfitted men for the discharge of their political duties; an opinion which he carried so far as to propose, that, as soon as

* See Marmontel, *Leçons sur la Morale*, p. 132, et seq.

a child was born, it should be separated from its parents, and educated ever after at the expense of the public. It has been often observed that persons brought up in foundling hospitals have seldom turned well out in the world; and although I doubt not that various splendid exceptions to this proposition may be quoted, I am inclined to think, that, if the special accidents connected with these exceptions were fully known, they would be found, instead of invalidating, to confirm the general rule. One thing, at least, is obvious, that, in that best of all educations which nature has provided for us in the ordinary circumstances of our condition, it formed an important part of her plan to soften the heart betimes amid the scenes of domestic life; and, accordingly, it is under the shelter of these scenes that all the social virtues may be seen to shoot up with the greatest vigor and luxuriancy. Even the sterner qualities of fortitude and bravery, so far from being inconsistent with a warm and susceptible heart, are almost its inseparable attendants, insomuch that we always *expect* to find them united. How true, in this respect, to all the best feelings of our nature, is the beautiful story recorded of Epaminondas, that, after the battle of Leuctra, he thanked the gods that his parents still survived to enjoy his fame!

It is remarked by Dr. Beattie that Homer and Virgil, the most accurate of all observers, and the most faithful of all painters of human character, always unite the domestic attachments with the more splendid virtues of their heroes. The scene between Hector and Andromache, and the interview between Ulysses and his father after an absence of twenty years, are pronounced by the same excellent critic to be the finest passages in the Iliad and Odyssey. He observes further, that, in the portrait of Achilles, his love to his parents forms one of the most prominent and distinguishing features, and that "this single circumstance throws an amiable softness into the most terrific human personage that was ever described in poetry." How powerful a charm the Æneid derives from the same source it is needless to mention, as it is the chief groundwork of the interest

inspired by the whole texture of the fable. In no instance is it more affecting than in the address of Euryalus to Nisus before they set out on their desperate expedition by night; and, I believe, few will deny that the pious concern which he expresses for his aged parent in that moment of approaching peril accords perfectly with the gallantry of his spirit, and interests us more than any thing else in his fortunes.

——————— "Contra quem talia fatur
Euryalus: 'Me nulla dies tam fortibus ausis
Dissimilem arguerit; tantùm fortuna secunda,
Haud adversa cadat: sed te, super omnia dona,
Unum oro: Genetrix Priami de gente vetustâ
Est mihi, quam miseram tenuit non Ilia tellus
Mecum excedentem, non mœnia regis Acestæ:
Hanc ego nunc ignaram hujus quodcunque pericli est
Inque salutatam linquo: Nox, et tua testis
Dextera, quòd nequeam lacrymas perferre parentis.
At tu, oro, solare inopem, et succurre relictæ.
Hanc sine me spem ferre tui; audentior ibo
In casus omnes.' Percussâ mente dederunt
Dardonidæ lacrymas: ante omnes pulcher Iulus,
Atque animum patriæ strinxit pietatis imago."

I shall conclude this section in the words of Lord Bacon. "Unmarried men are best friends, best masters, best servants, but not always best subjects, for they are light to run away, and almost all fugitives are of that condition. For soldiers, I find that the generals in their hortatives commonly put men in mind of their wives and children; and I think the despising of marriage among the Turks maketh the vulgar soldiers the more base. Certainly, wife and children are a kind of discipline of humanity; and single men, though they be many times more charitable, because their means are less exhaust; yet, on the other side, they are more cruel and hard hearted, because their tenderness is not so often called upon." *

* Bacon's Essays.

SECTION III.

Of Friendship.

FRIENDSHIP, like all the other benevolent affections, includes two things, an agreeable feeling, and a desire of happiness to its object.

Besides, however, the agreeable feeling common to all the exertions of benevolence, there are some peculiar to friendship. I before took notice of the pleasure we derive from communicating our thoughts and our feelings to others; but this communication prudence and propriety restrain us from making to strangers; and hence the satisfaction we enjoy in the society of one to whom we can communicate every circumstance in our situation, and can trust every secret of our heart.

There is also a wonderful pleasure arising from the sympathy of our fellow creatures with our joys and with our sorrows, nay, even with our tastes and our humors; but, in the ordinary commerce of the world, we are often disappointed in our expectations of this enjoyment; a disappointment which is peculiarly incident to men of genius and sensibility superior to the common, who frequently feel themselves "alone in the midst of a crowd," and reduced to the necessity of accommodating their own temper, and their own feelings, to a standard borrowed from those whom they cannot help thinking undeserving of such a sacrifice.

It is only in the society of a friend that this sympathy is at all times to be found; and the pleasing reflection that we have it in our power to command so exquisite a gratification, constitutes, perhaps, the principal charm of this connexion. "What we call affection," says Mr. Smith, "is nothing but an habitual sympathy." I will not go quite so far as to adopt this proposition in all its latitude, but I perfectly agree with this profound and amiable moralist in thinking, that the experience of this sympathy is the chief foundation of friendship, and one of the principal sources of the pleasures which it yields. Nor is it at all inconsistent with this observa-

tion to remark, that, where the groundwork of two characters in point of moral worth is the same, there is sometimes a contrast in the secondary qualities, of taste, of intellectual accomplishments, and even of animal spirits, which, instead of presenting obstacles to friendship, has a tendency to bind more strongly the knot of mutual attachment between the parties. Two very interesting and memorable examples of this may be found in Cuvier's account of the friendship between Buffon and Daubenton, and in Playfair's account of the friendship between Black and Hutton.

I do not mean here to enter into the consideration of the various topics relating to friendship which are commonly discussed by writers on that subject. *Most* of these, indeed I may say *all* of them, are beautifully illustrated by Cicero in the Treatise *de Amicitiâ*, in which he has presented us with a summary of all that was most valuable on this article of ethics in the writings of preceding philosophers; and so comprehensive is the view of it which he has taken, that the modern authors who have treated of it have done little more than to repeat his observations.

One question concerning friendship much agitated in the ancient schools was, "whether this connexion can subsist in its full perfection between more than two persons?"—and I believe it was the common decision of antiquity that it *cannot*. For my own part I can see no foundation for this limitation, and I own it seems to me to have been suggested more by the dreams of romance, or the fables of ancient mythology, than by good sense or an accurate knowledge of mankind. The passion of love between the sexes is indeed of an exclusive nature: and the jealousy of the one party is roused the moment a suspicion arises that the attachment of the other is in any degree divided; (and by the way this circumstance, which I think is strongly characteristical of that connexion, deserves to be added to the various other considerations which show that monogamy has a foundation in human nature). But the feelings of friendship are perfectly of a different sort. If our friend is a man of discernment, we rejoice at every new acquisition

he makes, as it affords us an opportunity of adding to our own list of worthy and amiable individuals, and we eagerly concur with him in promoting the interests of those who are dear to his heart. When we ourselves, on the other hand, have made a new discovery of worth and genius, how do we long to impart the same satisfaction to a friend, and to be instrumental in bringing together the various respectable and worthy men whom the accidents of life have thrown in our way!

I acknowledge, at the same time, that the number of our attached and confidential friends cannot be great, otherwise our attention would be too much distracted by the multiplicity of its objects, and the views for which this affection of the mind was probably implanted would be frustrated by its engaging us in exertions beyond the extent of our limited abilities; and, accordingly, nature has made a provision for preventing this inconvenience, by rendering friendship the fruit only of long and intimate acquaintance. It is strengthened not only by the acquintance which the parties have with each other's personal qualities, but with their histories, situations, and connexions from infancy, and every particular of this sort which falls under their mutual knowledge forms to the fancy an additional relation by which they are united. Men who have a very wide circle of friends without much discrimination or preference are justly suspected of being incapable of genuine friendship, and indeed are generally men of cold and selfish characters, who are influenced chiefly by a cool and systematical regard to their own comfort, and who value the social intercourse of life only as it is subservient to their accomodation and amusement.

That the affection of friendship includes a desire of happiness to the beloved object it is unnecessary to observe. There is, however, a certain limitation of the remark which occurs among the maxims of La Rochefoucauld, and which has been often repeated since by misanthropical moralists, "That, in the distresses of our best friends, there is always something which does not displease us." It may be proper to consider in what sense this is to be understood, and how far it has a

foundation in truth. It is expressed in somewhat equivocal terms; and, I suspect, owes much of its plausibility to this very circumstance.

From the triumphant air with which the maxim in question has been generally quoted by the calumniators of human nature, it has evidently been supposed by them to imply that the misfortunes of our best friends give us more pleasure than pain.* But this La Rochefoucauld has not said, nor indeed could a proposition so obviously false and extravagant have escaped the pen of so acute a writer. What La Rochefoucauld has said amounts only to this, that, in the distresses of our best friends, the pain we feel is not altogether unmixed; —a proposition unquestionably true wherever we have an opportunity of soothing their sorrows by the consolations of sympathy, or of evincing, by more substantial services, the sincerity and strength of our attachment. But the pleasure we experience in such cases, so far from indicating any thing selfish or malevolent in the heart, originates in principles of a directly opposite description, and will be always most pure and exquisite in the most disinterested and generous characters. The maxim, indeed, when thus interpreted, is not less true when applied to our own distresses than to those of our friends. In the bitterest cup that may fall to the lot of either there are always mingled some cordial drops,—in the misfortunes of others, the consolation of *administering* relief,—in our own, that of *receiving* it from the sympathy of those we love.

Whether La Rochefoucauld, in the satirical humour which dictated the greater part of his maxims did not wish, in the present instance, to convey by his words a little more than *meets the ear*, I do not presume to determine.

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* It was plainly in this sense that Swift understood it when he prefixed it a as motto to the verses on his own death.

> "As Rouchefoucauld his maxims drew
> From nature, I believe them true.
> If what he says be not a joke,
> We mortals are strange kind of folk."

SECTION IV.

Of Patriotism.

NOTWITHSTANDING the principles of union implanted by nature in the human breast, it was plainly *not* her intention that society should always go on increasing in numbers. A foundation is laid for a division of mankind into distinct communities, in those natural divisions on the surface of the globe that are formed by chains of mountains, impassable rivers, and the oceans which separate the larger continents; and the same end is further answered by those principles of enmity which, in the earlier stages of society, never fail to enstrange neighbouring tribes from each other, and which continue to operate with a very powerful effect even in periods of knowledge and refinement.

I shall not at present attempt to analyze particularly the origin of these principles of disunion among mankind. I shall only remark, that they do not imply any original malignity in the human heart; on the contrary, they seem to have their source in the social nature of man,—in those affections which attach him to the tribe he belongs to, and to the country which gave him birth. This remark has been so excellently illustrated by Lord Shaftesbury and by Dr. Ferguson, that it would be quite superfluous to enlarge upon it here. Contenting myself, therefore, with a reference to their works,* I shall proceed to some other views of the subject, where the field of observation does not seem to be so completely exhausted.

The foundation which nature has laid for a diversity of languages, of customs, of manners, and of institutions among mankind, adds force to the principles of division and repulsion already mentioned. These circumstances derive their effect, indeed, from the *ignorance* of men, which is apt to mistake a diversity of arbitrary signs and arbitrary ceremonies, for a diversity of opinions and

* See Shaftesbury's Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour, Part iii. sec. 2, and Ferguson's Essay on the History of Civil Society, Part i. sec. 4.

of moral sentiments; and, accordingly, as society advances, and reason improves, the effect becomes gradually less and less sensible. As the effect, however, is universal among rude nations, and as it is the unavoidable result of the general laws of our constitution when placed in certain circumstances, we may consider it as a part of the plan of Providence with respect to our species; and we may presume that here, as in other instances, that plan tends ultimately to some wise and beneficent purpose, though by means which appear to us, at first view, to have a very unfavorable aspect. What these purposes are it is impossible for our limited faculties to trace completely; but even *we*, narrow and partial as our views at present are, may perceive *some* salutary consequences resulting from these apparent disorders of the moral world. I shall only mention the tendency which a constant state of hostility and alarm must have among barbarous tribes to bind and consolidate in each of them apart the political union; and by strengthening the hands of government to prepare the way for the progress of society. We may add, the exercise which it gives to many of our most important moral principles, and the powerful stimulus it applies to our intellectual capacities. The discipline is indeed rough, but it is perhaps the only one of which the mind of man, in a certain state of his progress, is susceptible.

If these observations are well founded, may we not presume to offer a conjecture, that, as this final cause ceases to exist, in proportion as government advances to maturity, and as the moral causes of hostility among nations (arising from diversity of language and of manners) cease to operate upon men of enlightened and liberal minds, that the tendency of civilized society is to diminish the dissentions among different communities, and to unite the human race in the bonds of amity. The just views of political economy which Mr. Smith and some other authors have lately opened, and which demonstrate the absurdity of commercial jealousies, all contribute to encourage the same pleasing prospects; but alas! it is a prospect which the vices and prejudices of men allow us to indulge only in those moments of en-

thusiasm when our benevolent wishes for mankind, and our confidence in the wisdom and goodness of Providence, transport us from the calamities and atrocities of our own times, to anticipate the triumphs of reason and humanity in a more fortunate age.

In the Philosophy of the Human Mind I have remarked, that "there are many prejudices which are found to prevail universally among our species in certain periods of society, and which seem to be essentially necessary for maintaining its order in ages when men are unable to comprehend the purposes for which governments are instituted. As society advances these prejudices gradually lose their influence on the higher classes, and would probably soon disappear altogether, if it were not supposed to be expedient to prolong their existence as a source of authority over the multitude. In an age, however, of universal and unrestrained discussion, it is impossible that they can long maintain their empire; nor ought we to regret their decline, if the important ends to which they have been subservient in the past experience of mankind are found to be accomplished by the growing light of philosophy. On this supposition a history of human prejudices, in so far as they have supplied the place of more enlarged political views, may, at some future period, furnish to the philosopher a subject of speculation no less pleasing and instructive than that beneficent wisdom of nature which guides the operations of the lower animals, and which, even in our own species, takes upon itself the care of the individual in the infancy of human reason." *

The remarks which have been now made on the sources of disunion and hostility among mankind in the earlier periods of society, and on the final causes to which this constitution of things is subservient, afford one remarkable illustration of the conjecture which I have hazarded in the foregoing passage.

Before proceeding to consider the affection of patriotism, it was necessary to turn our attention for a moment to the principles of disunion in our species, as the

* Vol. I. pp. 274, 275, 6th Ed.

idea of patriotism proceeds on the supposition, that mankind are divided into distinct communities, with separate, if not with rival and hostile interests.

The exciting causes of patriotism (abstracting from all considerations of reason and duty) are many. We are formed with so strong a disposition to associate with, and to love our own species, that the imagination lays hold with eagerness of every circumstance, how slight soever, that can form a bond of union; a common language, a common religion, common laws, even a common appellation,—not to mention the prudential considerations of common enemies and a common interest. The feelings, which these uniting circumstances inspire, attach us even to the *territory* which our fellow citizens inhabit, by the same law of *association* that endears to us the spot where a friend was born, or the scene where we have enjoyed any social pleasure; and thus the imagination forms to itself a complex idea of countrymen and country, which impresses every susceptible heart with irresistible force. In perusing the history of either, how remote soever the period it describes may be, we feel an interest which no other narrative inspires. We sympathize with the fortunes of those who trod the same ground that we now tread, and we appropriate to ourselves a share of the glory they acquired by their bravery and virtue. "When the late Mr. Anson (Lord Anson's brother) was on his travels in the east, he hired a vessel to visit the Isle of Tenedos. His pilot, an old Greek, as they were sailing along, said with some satisfaction, 'Twas there our fleet lay.' Mr. Anson demanded *what fleet?*—'*What fleet!*' replied the old man, a little piqued at the question, 'why, our Grecian fleet at the siege of Troy.'" This anecdote (which I borrow from the Philological Inquiries of Mr. Harris)* naturally excites a smile; but it is, at the same time, so congenial to feelings inseparable from our constitution, that its effect seems to me to border on the pathetic, and I presume there are few who have read it without some emotion.

* Harris's Works, Edited by his son the Earl of Malmesbury, Vol. II. p. 462.

It is not a little remarkable, with respect to this natural attachment to the scenes of our infancy and youth, that it is commonly strongest among the inhabitants of barren and mountainous countries. This would appear to indicate that it is produced less by the recollection of agreeable physical impressions than of *moral* pleasures, —pleasures which probably derive an additional zest from the absence of those interesting or amusing objects which dissipate the attention by inviting the thoughts abroad. Where nature has been sparing in her external bounty, men become the more dependent for their happiness on internal enjoyment, and it is thus that the storms and gloom of winter give a higher relish to the pleasures of society. Perhaps, too, the thin and scattered population of such countries may contribute something to the romantic enthusiasm of the domestic and private attachments, as it is certain that the opposite extreme of a crowded and busy population seldom fails to extinguish all the more ardent social affections. Among the inhabitants of Europe this attachment to home is said to be the most remarkable in the Swiss and the Laplanders, who, when removed to a distance from their native scenes, are subject to a particular species of despondency, to which medical writers have given the name of *Nostalgia*. It is thus described by Haller, who was himself a native of Switzerland, and who, in some of his poetical pieces, composed during the period of his academical studies in Holland, has sufficiently shown that his own heart was not proof against its influence.

"*Nostalgia* genus est mœroris subditis reipublicæ meæ familiaris, etiam civibus, a desiderio nati suorum. Is sensim consumit ægros et destruit, nonnunquam in rigorem et maniam abit, aliàs in febres lentas. Eum spes sanat. Etiam animalia consuetâ societate privata, nonnunquam depereunt, et ex pullis amissis etiam lutræ maris Kamtchadalensis. Sic ex amore frustrato lenta et insanabilis consumptio sequitur, quod Angli *corruptum* vocant." *

* Elem. Physiol. Lib. xvii. Sect. 2. § 5.

We are informed by another medical writer, (Sauvages) that he has known this disorder in the son of a common beggar, who could scarcely be said to have any home but the streets and public roads.*

> "Thus every good his native wilds impart
> Imprints the patriot passion on his heart.
> And even the ills that round his mansion rise
> Enhance the bliss his scanty fund supplies.
> Dear is that shed to which his soul conforms,
> And dear that hill that lifts him to the storms.
> And as a child, when scaring sounds molest,
> Clings close and closer to its mother's breast,
> So the loud tempest and the whirlwind's roar
> But bind him to his native mountains more."

The sources of patriotism hitherto mentioned arise chiefly from the *imagination* and from the *association of ideas*, and have little or no connexion with our rational and moral powers. They presuppose, indeed, sensibility, social attachment, and force of mind, but they do not necessarily imply reflection or a sense of duty. They are the natural result of our constitution when placed in certain circumstances; and hence, though not coeval with our birth, nor after their appearance unsusceptible of analysis, the affection they produce, in so far as it arises from *them* without the cooperation of any other motive, may be considered as a *blind impulse*, analogous in its operation to those desires and appetites which have been already mentioned. This affection may be called, for the sake of distinction, Instinctive Patriotism.

The circumstances which have been enumerated as the sources of instinctive patriotism operate with peculiar force in small communities, where the extent of the territory and the body of the people falling under the habitual observation of every citizen, present more definite objects to the imagination, and affect the heart more deeply that what is only conceived from description. *Here*, too, the individual feels his importance as an active member of the state, and the consciousness of what he is able to do for its prosperity contributes powerfully to promote his patriotic exertions.

* Nosologia Methodica.

In an extensive and populous country the instinctive affection of patriotism is apt to grow languid among the mass of the people, and therefore it becomes the more necessary to impress on their minds those considerations of reason and duty which recommend public spirit as one of the principal branches of morality. What these considerations are I shall afterwards endeavour to point out in treating of the duties we owe to our fellow creatures. At present I shall only remark, that, as instinctive patriotism decays, so rational patriotism acquires force in proportion to the extent of territory and to the multitude of fellow citizens it embraces; in other words, in proportion to the magnitude of that sum of happiness which it aspires to secure and to augment.

Such considerations, however, can have weight only with men whose sense of duty is strong; and as, unfortunately, this is not the case with a great proportion of mankind, it is of the utmost consequence, in every state of society, to cherish as much as possible the instinctive affection of patriotism, and to counteract those causes that tend to extinguish it. For this purpose nothing is more likely to be effectual than to diffuse a general taste for historical and geographical reading. A peasant who has never extended his thoughts beyond his own province, and who sees every thing flourishing and happy around him, is apt to consider the enjoyments he possesses as inseparable from the human race, and no more connected with any particular system of laws than the advantages he derives from the immediate bounty of nature. It is the study of history and geography alone than can remove this prejudice, by showing us, on the one hand, the narrow limits within which the political happiness of our species has hitherto been confined; and, on the other, the singular combination of accidental circumstances to which we are indebted for the blessings we enjoy. This effect of history indeed tends rather to cherish *rational* than *instinctive* patriotism; but it operates also wonderfully on the latter affection, by leading us to contrast our own country and countrymen with other lands and other nations, and thereby presenting a more definite and interesting ob-

ject to the imagination and to the heart. When, from the transactions of past ages and of foreign lands, we return to what is near and familiar, we are affected somewhat in the same manner as if we met with a fellow citizen in a distant country. Absence from home never fails to endear it to a mind possessed of any sensibility. The extent of our country, too, seems to diminish to our intellectual eye in proportion as the object recedes from us, and we feel a sensible relation to what we before regarded with complete indifference. The natives of the same county in Scotland feel towards each other a partial predilection when they meet in the metropolis of Great Britain; and the circumstance of being born in this island forms a tie of friendship between individuals in the other quarters of the globe. The study of history operates somewhat in the same manner, though not perhaps in the same degree. By transporting us in imagination over the surface of this planet, and by assembling before our view the myriads who have occupied it before us, it serves to define to our thoughts more distinctly the particular community to which we belong, and strengthens the bond of relationship that unites us to all its members.

I shall only add further on this subject, that, when the extent and population of a country are so *very* great as to give it a decided preeminence among neighbouring nations, it has a tendency to produce (partly by interesting the vanity, and partly by dazzling the imagination) an attachment to *national glory*, which operates both on the vulgar and on men of better education, in a way extremely analogous to the instinctive patriotism felt by the member of a small community. A remarkable instance of this occurred in the national character of the French prior to the late Revolution, nor does it seem to have altered in this respect since that event, if we may judge from the indignation with which the idea of a confederate republic has always been received. A feeling of the same kind may be traced in various expressions employed by Livy in the preface to his Roman history. "Utcunque erit, juvabit tamen rerum gestarum memoriæ principis terrarum populi, pro virili

parte, et ipsum consuluisse; et si in tantâ scriptorum turbâ mea fama in obscuro sit, nobilitate ac magnitudine eorum qui nomini officient meo me consoler. Res est præterea et immensi operis, ut quæ supra septingentesimum annum repetatur, et quæ ab exiguis profecta initiis eo creverit, ut jam magnitudine laboret suâ: et legentium plerisque haud dubito, quin primæ origines proximaque originibus, minus præbitura voluptatis sint, festinantibus ad hæc nova, quibus jampridem prævalentis populi vires se ipsæ conficiunt." The very danger which such an empire was exposed to from its enormous magnitude, and from the seeds of destruction which it carried in its bosom, seems to heighten the patriotic affection of the historian, by awakening an anxious solicitude for its impending fate. The contrast between this feeling of national pride, and a melancholy anticipation of those calamities to which national greatness leads, gives the principal charm to this exquisite composition.

SECTION V.

Of Pity to the Distressed.

As the unfortunate chiefly stand in need of our assistance, so there is provided in every breast a most powerful advocate in their favor; an advocate, to whose solicitations it is impossible even for the most obdurate to turn always a deaf ear. The appropriation of the word *humanity* to this part of our constitution affords sufficient evidence of the common sentiments of mankind upon the subject.

> "Mollissima corda
> Humano generi dare se natura fatetur,
> Quæ lacrymas dedit. Hæc nostri pars optima sensûs.
> ——————— Separat hoc nos
> A grege mutorum." *

The general principle of benevolence, or of good will to our fellow creatures, (of which I shall treat after-

* Juv. Sat. 15.

wards, when I come to consider our Moral duties) as it disposes us to promote the happiness of others, so it restrains us from doing them evil, and prompts us to relieve their distresses. The office of compassion or pity is more limited. It impels us to relieve distress; it serves as a check on resentment and selfishness, and the other principles which lead us to injure the interests of others; but it does not prompt us to the communication of positive happiness. Its object is to *relieve*, and sometimes to *prevent*, suffering; but not to augment the enjoyment of those who are already easy and comfortable. We are disposed to do this by the general spirit of benevolence, but not by the particular affection of pity.

The final cause of this constitution of our nature is very ingeniously and happily pointed out by Dr. Butler in his second sermon on *Compassion*. This profound philosopher observes, that "supposing men to be capable of happiness and of misery in degrees equally intense, yet they are liable to the latter during longer periods of time than they are susceptible of the former. We frequently see men suffering the agonies of pain for days, weeks, and months together, without any intermission, except the short suspensions of sleep,—a stretch of misery to which no state of high enjoyment can approach in point of duration. Such, too, is our constitution, and that of the world around us, that the sources of our sufferings are placed much more within the power of other men than the sources of our pleasures, so that there is no individual, (however incapable he may be to add to the happiness of his fellow creatures) who has it not in his power to do them great and extensive mischief. To prevent the abuse of this power when we are under the influence of any of the angry passions, by means of a particular affection tending to check the excess of resentment, was therefore of more consequence to the comfort of human life than it would have been to superadd to the general principle of good will a particular affection prompting to the communication of positive enjoyment. The power we have over the misery of our fellow creatures being a more

important trust than our power of promoting the happiness of those already comfortable, the former stood more in need of a guard to check its excesses than the latter of a *stimulus* to animate its exertions. But further, as it is more in our power to *communicate* misery than happiness, so it is more in our power to *relieve* misery than to superadd enjoyment. Hence an additional reason for implanting in our constitution the affection of compasssion, while there is none analogous to it urging us by an instinctive impulse to acts of general benevolence."

The final causes of compassion, then, are to prevent and to relieve misery—to *prevent* misery by checking the violence of our own angry passions, and to *relieve* misery by calling our attention, and engaging our good offices, to every object of distress within our reach. The latter is the more common and the more important of its offices, at least in the present state of society. And it is this which I have chiefly in view in the following observations.

I have said that compassion calls or arrests our attention to the distressed objects within our reach. When we are immersed in the business of the world, or intoxicated with its pleasures, we are apt to overlook, and sometimes to withdraw from scenes of misery. It is the office of compassion to plead the cause of the wretched, or rather to solicit us to take their case under our consideration; for so strong is the sense which all men have of the duty of beneficence, that, if they could only be brought to exercise their powers of reflection on the facts before them, they could scarcely ever fail to relieve distress, when, in consistency with other obligations, it was in their power to do so. One striking proof of this is, that the active zeal of humanity is *(cæteris paribus)* strongest in those men whose warm imaginations present to them lively pictures of the sufferings of others; and that there is scarcely any man, however callous and selfish, whose beneficence may not be called forth by a skilful and eloquent description of any scene of misery. General considerations with regard to our social duties will often have little weight;

but if the attention can only be fixed to facts, nature, in most instances, accomplishes the rest. Hence the importance in our constitution of the affection of compassion, which, amidst the tumult of business or of pleasure, stops us suddenly in our career, and reminds us that we have social duties to fulfil;—calls upon us to examine the claims of the helpless, and aggravates our guilt if we disregard its admonition.

Compassion, according to the view now given of it, is an *instinctive impulse* prompting to a particular object, analogous in many respects to the animal appetites already considered. It is, indeed, one of the most amiable, and one of the most important parts of our constitution; but it is not an object of moral approbation. Our duty lies in the proper regulation of it—in considering with attention the facts it recommends to our notice, and in acting with respect to them as reason and conscience prescribe. It is hardly necessary for me to add, that there are cases in which these inform us that we *ought not* to follow the impulse of compassion, and in which it is no less meritorious in us to resist its solicitations, than to deny ourselves the unlawful gratification of a sensual appetite; and even in those instances in which our duty calls us to obey its impulse, our merit does not arise from the affection we feel, but from doing what our conscience approves of as *right* on a deliberate consideration of the action we are to perform, when examined in all its bearings and consequences.

Notwithstanding, however, the unquestionable truth of this theoretical conclusion, it is nevertheless certain, that a strong and habitual tendency to indulge this affection affords no slight presumption in favor of the worth and benevolence of a character. Whoever reflects, on the one hand, upon its general coincidence with what a sense of duty prescribes; and upon the other, on the nature of those circumstances by which its indulgence is checked and discouraged among men of the world, will, I apprehend, readily assent to the truth of this observation. The poet, perhaps, went a little too far when he stated as a general and unqualified maxim, Ἀγαθοὶ ἀριδάκρυες ἄνδρες;* but, upon the

* "*Good men* are prone to shed tears."—"The poets," says Mr. Wollaston, "who

whole, I am inclined to think that this maxim, with all the exceptions which may contradict it, will be found much nearer to the fact than they who have been trained in the schools of fashionable *persiflage* will be disposed to acknowledge.

The philosophers who attempt to resolve the whole of human conduct into self-love, have adopted various theories to explain the affection of pity. Without stopping to examine these, I shall confine myself to a simple statement of the fact, which statement will at once show how far all these are erroneous, and will point out the oversight in which they have originated. Whoever reflects carefully on the effect produced on his own mind by objects which excite his pity must be sensible that it is a compounded one; and, therefore, unless we are at pains to analyze it carefully, we may be apt to mistake some one of the ingredients for the whole combination.

On the sight of distress we are distinctly conscious, I think, of three things: 1. A painful emotion in consequence of the distress we see. 2. A selfish desire to remove the cause of this uneasiness. 3. A disposition to relieve the distress from a *benevolent* and disinterested concern about the sufferer. If we had not this last disposition, and if it were not stronger than the former, the sight of a distressed object would invariably prompt us to fly from it, as we frequently see those men do in whom the second ingredient prevails over the third. In ordinary cases the impulse of pity attaches us to the cause of our sufferings; and we cling

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of all writers undertake to imitate nature most, oft introduce even their heroes weeping."—(See how Homer represents Ulysses. Od. E. 151, 152, 157, 158.) "The tears of men," the same author finely adds, "are in truth very different from the cries and ejulations of children. They are *silent streams*, and flow from other causes, commonly some tender, or perhaps philosophical reflection. It is easy to see how hard hearts and dry eyes come to be fashionable. But for all that it is certain the *glandulæ lachrymales* were not made for nothing."—(*Religion of Nature Delineated*, p. 258. 8th Edition.)

It is remarked by Descartes, that the tears of children and of old men (in which both are apt to indulge) flow from different sources. "Senes sæpe lachrymantur ex amore et gaudio. Infantes raro ex lætitiâ lachrymantur, sæpius ex tristitiâ, etiam quam amor non comitatur."—(*De Passionibus*, Secunda Pars, Articulus 133.) The important facts here described have seldom been remarked; and the statement of them does honor to Descartes as an attentive and accurate observer of human nature in the beginning and towards the close of its history.

to it, even although we are conscious that we can afford no relief but the consolation of sympathy;—a demonstrative proof that one at least of the ingredients of pity (and in most men the prevailing ingredient) is purely disinterested in its nature and origin.

Although, however, this observation seems to me decisive against the theory in question, in whatever form it may be proposed, I cannot omit this opportunity of examining a new modification of the same hypothesis, which occurs in Mr. Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments. The view of the subject which he has taken has the merit of entire originality, and, like all his other speculations and opinions, derives a strong recommendation from the splendid abilities and exemplary worth of the author. I hope therefore, that the critical strictures upon it which I am now to offer will not be considered as a useless or unreasonable interruption of the discussions in which we are at present engaged.

Before entering on this argument, I shall just mention another hypothesis concerning the origin of compassion, which seems to me to approach more nearly to that of Mr. Smith than any thing else I have met with in the works of his predecessors. I allude to the account of *Pity* given by Hobbes, who defines it to be "the imagination or fiction of *future* calamity to ourselves proceeding from the sense of another man's calamity."* In what respect this theory *coincides* with Mr. Smith's, will appear from the remarks I am now to make. In the mean time I shall only observe how completely the futility of Hobbes's definition is exposed by a single remark of Butler. "That, if it were just, it would follow that the most fearful temper would be the most compassionate." † We may add too, that our pity is more strongly excited by the distresses of an infant than by those of the aged, although the former are such as we

* Descartes has adopted this theory of Hobbes. "Illi, qui se valde debiles sentiunt et obnoxios adversæ fortunæ, videntur aliis propensiores ad misericordiam, quia sibi repræsentant alienum malum ceu quod sibi quoque queat evenire, et sic ad misericordiam moventur magis ex amore sui quam aliorum."—*De Passionibus*, Tertia Pars, Articulus clxxxvi.

† See an excellent note on Sermon V. It contains an important hint about *sympathy*, which Mr. Smith has prosecuted with great ingenuity.

cannot possibly be exposed to suffer a *second time*, and the *latter* such as we must expect to endure sooner or later, if the period of life should be prolonged to that term, which the weakness of most individuals disposes them to wish for.

The leading principles of Mr. Smith's theory, in as far as it applies to *pity* or *compassion*, are comprehended in the three following propositions. 1. That it is from our own experience alone we can form any idea of the sufferings of another person on any particular occasion.

2. That the only manner in which we can form this idea is by supposing ourselves in the same circumstances with him, and then conceiving how we should be affected if we were so situated.

3. That the uneasiness which we feel in consequence of the sufferings of another arises from our conceiving those sufferings to be our own.

The *first* of these propositions is unquestionable. Our notions of pain and of suffering are undoubtedly derived *in the first instance*, from our own experience.

The *second* proposition is perhaps expressed with too great a degree of latitude. That in order to understand completely the sufferings of our neighbours in any particular instance, it is necessary for us to have been once placed in circumstances somewhat similar to his, I believe to be true, and there can be no doubt that it is frequently useful to us to collect our attention to the distresses of others, by conceiving their situation to be ours; but it does not appear to me that this process of the mind takes place in every case in which we are affected by the sight of misery. When we are once satisfied that a particular situation is a natural source of misery to the person placed in it, the bare perception of the situation is sufficient to excite an unpleasant emotion in the spectator, without any reference whatever to himself. This is easily explicable on the common doctrine of *the association of ideas*.

Nor is this all. The looks, the gestures, the tones of distress, speak in a moment from heart to heart, and affect us with an anguish more exquisitely piercing than any we are able to produce by all the various expedi-

ents we can employ to assist the imagination in conceiving the situation of the sufferer.

But, abstracting from these considerations, and granting the second proposition in all its extent, the third proposition is by no means a necessary consequence of it; for, even in those cases in which we endeavour to awaken our compassion for the sufferings of our neighbour by conceiving ourselves placed in his situation, our compassion is not founded on a belief that the sufferings are ours. So long as we conceive ourselves in distress, we feel a certain degree of uneasiness; but this is not the uneasiness of compassion. In order to excite this we must apply to our neighbour the result of what we have experienced in ourselves; or in other words, having formed an idea of what he suffers by bringing his case home to ourselves, we must carry our attention back to *him* before he becomes the object of our pity. Nor is there any thing mysterious or wonderful in this process of the mind. That we are so formed as to expect that the operation of the same cause, in similar circumstances, will be attended with the same result, might be shown from a thousand instances. It is thus, that, having tried a physical experiment on certain substances, I take for granted that the result of a similar experiment, on similar substances, will be the same. It is thus that I conclude with the most perfect confidence, that a wound given to my body in a particular organ would be instantly fatal; although it is worthy of remark, that in this case I have no direct evidence from experience that the internal structure of my body is similar to those of the bodies which anatomists have hitherto examined. Now, I apprehend, it is in the same manner, that, having once experienced the pain produced by an instrument of torture applied to myself, I take for granted that the effect will be the same when it is applied to another. In consequence of this application the sentiment of compassion arises in my mind, during the continuance of which my attention is completely engrossed, not about myself, but about the real sufferer.

And indeed, if the case were otherwise, compassion

would be ultimately resolvable into a selfish principle, and those men would be most ready to feel the distresses of others who are most impatient of their own. A remark similar to this (as I already observed) is made by Dr. Butler, with respect to a theory of Hobbes, who defines pity to be the fiction of future calamity to ourselves from the sight of the present calamity of another. "Were this the case," says Butler, "the most fearful tempers would be the most compassionate." According to Mr. Smith, pity arises from the fiction, not of *future*, but of *present* calamity to ourselves. The two theories approach very nearly to each other, and the same answer is applicable to both.*

In further proof that the distress produced by the sufferings of others arises from a conception that these distresses are our own, Mr. Smith mentions a variety of facts which he thinks establish his doctrine with demonstrative evidence. "When we see a stroke aimed and just ready to fall on the leg or arm of another person, we naturally shrink and draw back our own leg or our own arm, and when it does fall we feel it in some measure, and are hurt by it as well as the sufferer. The mob, when they are gazing at a dancer on the slack rope, naturally writhe and twist and balance their own bodies as they see him do, and as they feel that they must themselves do, if in his situation."—"In general," he observes, "that as to be in pain or distress of any kind excites the most excessive sorrow, so to conceive or to imagine that we are in it, excites some degree of the same emotion, in proportion to the vivacity or dulness of the conception."

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*So far indeed is it from being true that those who are most impatient under their personal distresses are the most prone to commiserate the sorrows of others, that I apprehend the reverse of this supposition will be found agreeable to universal experience. The most unfeeling characters I have ever known have been men not only tremblingly alive to the slightest evil which affected themselves, but whose whole attention seemed manifestly to be engrossed with their own comforts and luxuries. On the other hand, the nearest approaches I have happened to witness to stoical patience and fortitude under severe suffering have been invariably accompanied with a peculiarly strong disposition to social tenderness and sympathy. Gray alludes to this contrast in his Hymn to Adversity:—

"To each his sufferings; all are men
Condemned alike to groan;
The feeling for another's pain,
The unfeeling for his own."

The facts here appealed to by Mr. Smith are indeed extremely curious, and I do not pretend to explain them. They are not, however, singular facts in our constitution, but belong to that class of phenomena which medical writers refer to what they call *the Principle of Imitation.** Of this kind are the contagious effects of hysterics—of yawning—of laughter—of crying, &c. In these last cases Mr. Smith would suppose, if he were to apply the same reasoning he uses in analogous instances, that the effect arises from our conceiving ludicrous or sorrowful ideas similar to those by which these emotions are produced. But the primary effect seems to be produced on the body, and the secondary effect on the mind; somewhat in the same manner in which we can excite a sensible degree of the passion of anger in our own breast by imitating the looks and gestures which are expressive of rage. It does not appear to me that this bodily contagion of the expression of passion has any immediate connexion with our fellow feeling with distress. If it had, those would be most liable to it who felt the most deeply for the sorrows of others,—a conclusion which is certainly not agreeable to fact. During the madness of Belvidera, those who are most powerfully affected by the representation are not the nervous ladies who catch from the actress something similar to a hysteric paroxysm; but they who, retaining their own reason, reflect on the train of misfortunes which have unhinged her mind, and who weep for her madness, not so much as a misfortune in itself, as an indication of that conflict of passions by which it was produced. The effect in the former case depends on a peculiar irritability and mobility of the bodily frame altogether unconnected with any of the moral sympathies or sensibilities of our nature.

* In the Philosophy of the Human Mind, Vol. III. I have distinguished this law of our nature by the more precise and unequivocal title of the principle of *Sympathetic Imitation*.

SECTION VI.

Of Resentment and the various other angry Affections grafted upon it, (commonly considered by Ethical Writers as Malevolent Affections.)

THE names which are given to these affections in common discourse are various, *Hatred, Jealousy, Envy, Revenge, Misanthropy;* but it may be doubted if there be any principle of this kind implanted by nature in the mind, excepting the principle of *Resentment*, the others being grafted on this stock by our erroneous opinions and criminal habits.

Emulation, indeed, (which is unquestionably an original principle of action) is treated of by Dr. Reid under the title of the *Malevolent Affections.* But I formerly gave my reasons for classing this principle with the *desires*, and not with the *affections.* I acknowledged, indeed, that emulation is often accompanied with ill will to our rival; but the malevolent affection is only a concomitant circumstance; and it is not the affection, but the desire of superiority, which can be justly regarded as the active principle.

Nor is this sentiment of ill will a *necessary* concomitant of the desire of superiority; for there is unquestionably a solid distinction between emulation and envy, the latter of which is a corruption of the former, disgraceful to the character, and ruinous to the happiness of whoever indulges it. In the case of envy the malevolent affection arises, I believe, generally from some error of the judgment, or some illusion of the imagination, leading us to refer the cause of our own want of success either to some injustice on the part of our rival, or to an unjust partiality in the world which overrates his merits and undervalues ours. In both of these cases the desire of superiority generates malevolent affections, by first leading us to apprehend *injustice*, and thus exciting the natural passion of resentment.

Before proceeding to consider this principle of action, it may be proper again to remark, that, when the epithet *malevolent* is appled to it, that word must not be

understood to imply any thing criminal, at least so long as resentment is restrained within proper bounds, after having been originally excited by real injustice. The epithet *malevolent* is used only to express that temporary ill will towards the author of the apprehended injustice with which resentment is necessarily accompanied till it begins to subside.

One of the first authors who examined with success this part of our constitution, and illustrated the important purposes to which it is subservient, was Bishop Butler, in an excellent discourse printed among his Sermons. The hints he has thrown out have evidently been of great use both to Lord Kames and Mr. Smith in their speculations concerning the principles of morals.

To Butler we are indebted for the illustration of a very important distinction (which had been formerly hinted at by Hobbes) between instinctive and deliberate resentment. Instinctive resentment operates in men exactly as in the lower animals, arising necessarily from any feeling of pain excited by external objects, and prompting us to a retaliation upon the cause of our suffering without any exercise whatever of reflection and reason. It is thus that a child beats the ground after it has hurt itself by a fall, and that we sometimes see a passionate man wreak his vengeance on inanimate objects by dashing them to pieces. This species of resentment, however, subsides instantly, and we are ready next moment to smile at the absurdity of our conduct.

Deliberate resentment is excited only by intentional injury, and therefore implies a sense of justice, or of moral good or evil. It is plainly peculiar to a rational nature, and perhaps it is not very distinguishable from instinctive or animal resentment in the ruder state of our own species. It is observed by Dr. Robertson, that "the desire of vengeance which takes possession of the heart of savages resembles the instinctive rage of an animal rather than the passion of a man, and that it turns with undiscerning fury even against inanimate objects." He adds, "that, if struck with an arrow in battle, they will tear it from the wound, break and bite it with their teeth, and dash it on the ground." *

* America, Vol. I. pp. 351, 352.

This distinction too is much insisted on by Lord Kames in various parts of his writings; and it is from him that I have borrowed the phrase of *instinctive resentment*, which he has substituted instead of *sudden resentment*, employed by Butler.

The final cause of instinctive resentment was plainly to defend us against sudden violence, (where reason would come too late to our assistance) by rousing the powers both of mind and body to instant and vigorous exertion. A number of our other instincts are perfectly analogous to this. Such, for example, is the instinctive effort we make to recover ourselves when we are in danger of losing our balance,* and the instinctive dispatch with which we shut the eyelids when an object is

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* Although I have followed Dr. Reid's language in calling this an *instinctive* effort, I am abundantly aware that the expression is not unexceptionable. On this head I perfectly agree (excepting in one single point) with the following remarks of Gravesande.

"Il y a quelque chose d'admirable dans le moyen ordinaire dont les hommes se servent, pour s'empêcher de tomber: car dans le tems que, par quelque mouvement, le poids du corps s'augmente d'une coté, un autre mouvement rétablit l'équilibre dans l'instant. On attribue communément la chose à un *instinct naturel* quoiqu'il faille nécessairement l'attribuer à un art perfectionné par l'exercice.

"Les enfans ignorent absolument cet art dans les premières années de leur vie; ils l'apprennent peu à peu, et s'y perfectionnent, parce qu'ils ont continuellement occasion de s'y exercer; exercice qui, dans la suite, n'exige presque plus aucune attention de leur part; tout comme un musicien remue les doigts, suivant les règles de l'art, pendant qu'il apperçoit à peine qu'il y fasse le moindre attention."—*Œuvres Philosophiques de M. s'Gravesande* p. 121, 2de Partie, Amsterdam 1774.

The only thing I am disposed to object to in the foregoing passage is that clause where the author describes *the effort in question* to an *art*. Is it not manifestly as wide of the truth to refer it to *this* source as to a pure instinct?

The word *art* implies intelligence,—the perception of an *end*, and the choice of *means*. But where is there any appearance of either in an operation common to the whole species, (not excepting the idiot and the insane) and which is practised as successfully by the brutes as by rational creatures.

Elephants (it is well known) were taught by the ancients to walk on the tight rope, on which occasions their trunk probably performed the office of a pole. Whoever has seen a peacock walk in a windy day along the branch of a tree must have observed the address with which he avails himself of his tail for the same purpose.

Nothing, however, can place in a stronger light the capacity of the brutes to acquire the nice management of the centre of gravity than the mathematical exactness with which we may daily see horses in the *circus* adjusting the inclination of their bodies to the velocity of their circular speed. Here, indeed, a good deal is to be ascribed to the effects of human discipline, but by far the greater part of the groundwork is laid by nature in the instinctive dispositions of the animal. The acquisition seems to be almost as easy as that of the habits which constitute the acquired perceptions of sight.

In one of the last volumes of Dr. Clarke's Travels there is a figure of a goat, whom the author saw standing with its four feet collected together on the top of a cylindrical piece of wood of a few inches diameter. Nobody can doubt that the effects of discipline were greatly facilitated in this instance by the natural instincts of the goat, which probably accommodated themselves with very little instruction to the artificial circumstances in which they were forced to operate.

made to pass rapidly before the face. In general it will be found, that, as nature has taken upon herself the care of our preservation during the infancy of our reason, so in every case in which our existence is threatened by dangers, against which reason is unable to supply a remedy with sufficient promptitude, she continues this guardian care through the whole of life.

The disposition which we sometimes feel, when under the influence of instinctive resentment, to wreak our vengeance upon inanimate objects, has suggested to Dr. Reid a very curious query, Whether, upon such an occasion, we may have a momentary belief that the object is alive? For my own part I confess my inclination to answer this question in the affirmative. I agree with Dr. Reid in thinking, that, unless we had such a belief, our conduct could not possibly be what it frequently is, and that it is not till this momentary belief is at an end that our conduct appears to ourselves to be absurd and ludicrous. With respect to infants there are many facts beside that now under consideration which render it probable that their first apprehensions lead them to believe all the objects around them to be animated, and that it is only in consequence of experience and reason that they come to form the notion of insentient substances. If this be the case, the illusion of imagination which leads us to ascribe life to things inanimate, when we are under the influence of instinctive resentment, may perhaps be owing to a momentary relapse in those apprehensions which were habitually familiar to us in the first years of our existence.

But whatever theory we adopt on the subject, there can be no doubt about the fact, that the final cause of this law of our nature was to secure and guard us against the sudden effects of external injuries in cases where there is not time for deliberation and judgment. With respect to the injuries we are liable to from our fellow creatures, it secures us further by its effect in restraining *them* from acts of violence. "It is a kind of penal statute promulgated by nature, the execution of which is committed to the sufferer." *

* Reid.

In man the instinctive resentment subsides as soon as he is satisfied that no injury was intended; and it is only *intentional* injury that is the object of settled and deliberate resentment. The final cause of this species of resentment is analogous to that of the other,—to serve as a check on those men whose violent or malignant passions might lead them to disturb the happiness of their fellow creatures.

In order to secure still more effectually so very important an end, we are so formed, that the injustice offered to *others*, as well as to ourselves, awakens our resentment against the aggressor, and prompts us to take part in the redress of their grievances. In this case the emotion we feel is more properly denoted in our language by the word *indignation;* but (as Butler has remarked) our principle of action is in both cases fundamentally the same,—an aversion or displeasure at injustice and cruelty which interests us in the punishment of those by whom they have been exhibited. Resentment, therefore, when restrained within due bounds, seems to be rather a sentiment of hatred against vice than an affection of ill will against any of our fellow creatures; and, on this account, I am somewhat doubtful (notwithstanding the apology I have already made for the title of this section) whether I have not followed Dr. Reid too closely in characterizing resentment, considered as an original part of the constitution of man, by the epithet of *malevolent.*

An additional confirmation of this doctrine arises from the following consideration: That, in candid and generous minds, the whole object of resentment is to convince the person who has injured them that he has treated them unjustly,—to show him that he has formed an unfair estimate of their characters and of their talents, and to obtain such a superiority over him in point of *power* as to be able, by a generous forgiveness of his aggressions, to convert his malice into gratitude. In other words, in such minds the great object of resentment is to correct the faults of the delinquent, and to make a friend of an enemy.

This last observation points out (by the way) the fi-

nal cause of a very remarkable circumstance accompanying the affection of resentment when excited by an injury offered to ourselves. We desire not only the punishment of the offender, but that we should have the power of inflicting the punishment with our own hand. It is probable that this originates partly in our love of power; but I believe it is chiefly owing to a secret wish of convincing our enemy, by the magnanimity of our conduct, how much he had mistaken the object of his hatred. In the mean and the malicious, the passion of revenge is gratified by any suffering inflicted on an enemy, whether by an indifferent person or by the hand of Heaven.

After all, however, that I have advanced in justification of this part of the human constitution, I must acknowledge that there is no principle of action which requires more pains, even in the best minds, to restrain it within the bounds of moderation. The imagination exaggerates the injuries that we ourselves have received; and mistaken views of human nature, concurring with low spirits or disappointed ambition, lead us to ascribe to our opponents worse motives than those from which they really have acted. We seldom, too, are sufficiently attentive to the situations and feelings of other men, and even where we do make an effort to place ourselves in their circumstances, it is not every man who is possessed of the degree of imagination requisite for that purpose. Our own sufferings, at the same time, are always present to our view, and force themselves on the notice of the most thoughtless without any effort on their part. And hence it is that an irritability to personal injury is often accompanied with a callousness to the feelings of others, and even with a disposition to put unfavorable constructions on their actions.

In order to check the excesses to which this ungovernable passion is apt to lead us, nature has made a beautiful provision in that sentiment of indignation which the sight of injustice excites in the breast of the unconcerned spectator. This sentiment interests society in general in the cause of the oppressed, and serves to protect the weak against the wrongs of the powerful. As

it is not, however, liable to the same excesses with the passion of resentment excited by a personal injury, it sympathizes only with the injured while his retaliations are restrained within the bounds of moderation. When resentment rises to cruel and relentless revenge, unconcerned spectators become disposed to abandon the cause they had espoused, and to transfer their protection to the original aggressor.

It does not follow from this observation that resentment and indignation are two distinct principles; for the whole difference between them may be accounted for from the different views we naturally take of our own wrongs and those of others. They are both founded in a sentiment of aversion and ill will excited by injustice, but the one is more apt to pass the bounds of moderation than the other, in consequence of the facts being more strongly obtruded on our notice, and often exaggerated by the heightenings of imagination.

Mr. Smith has endeavoured, on the principles now stated, to account for the origin of our sense of justice. The passion of resentment, he thinks, when excited by a personal injury, would set no bounds to its gratification, but would lead us to sacrifice every thing to revenge. But, as we find that other men would not go along with us when our revenge ceases to bear any proportion to the original injury, we learn to adjust our retaliations not to our own feelings, but to those of the impartial spectator. Hence the origin of our sense of justice, our regard for which arises from our desire of obtaining the sympathy and the support of society.

I shall afterwards state some objections to this theory, which appear to me unanswerable. In particular, I shall attempt to show, that, so far is our idea of justice from being posterior to the affections of resentment and indignation, and to a comparision between our own feelings and those of other men, that the very emotion of deliberate resentment presupposes the idea of justice, and of what is morally right and wrong. The fact, however, on which the theory proceeds, is a most important one, and Mr. Smith has had great merit in illustrating it so fully. Lord Kames, in his Historical Law Tracts,

has made a happy application of it to explain the origin and progress of criminal law. Which of these two authors first conceived the idea of applying it to *jurisprudence* does not appear to me to be perfectly certain. Both of them have evidently been much indebted in their speculations concerning this part of human nature to the Sermons of Bishop Butler.

I shall conclude this subject at present with remarking, that, as all the benevolent affections are accompanied with pleasant emotions, so all the malevolent affections are sources of pain and disquiet. This is true even of resentment, how justly soever it may be roused by the injurious conduct of others. Here, too, we may perceive a final cause perfectly analogous to that of which I formerly took notice in treating of the benevolent affections. As the pleasant emotion accompanying *these* seems evidently to have been intended as an incitement to us to cultivate and cherish them, so the painful feeling accompanying resentment, and every other affection which is hostile to our fellow creatures, serves as a check on the habitual indulgence of them, and induces us, as soon as the first impulse of passion is over, and reason begins to reassume her empire, to obliterate every trace of them from the memory. Dr. Reid has expressed this last observation with great beauty, and has enforced it with uncommon felicity of illustration. "When we consider that, on the one hand, every benevolent affection is pleasant in its nature, is health to the soul, and a cordial to the spirits; that nature has made even the outward expression of benevolent affections in the countenance pleasant to every beholder, and the chief ingredient of beauty in the *human face divine;* that, on the other hand, every malevolent affection, not only in its faulty excesses, but in its moderate degrees, is vexation and disquiet to the mind, and even gives deformity to the countenance, it is evident that by these signals nature loudly admonishes us to use the former as our daily bread, both for health and pleasure, but to consider the latter as a nauseous medicine, which is never to be taken without necessity, and even then in no greater quantity than the necessity requires."

After the clear, and, at the same time, cautious terms in which Butler, Kames, and Smith have expressed themselves concerning *Resentment*, it is surprising to find some late writers of considerable name speaking of the *pleasure of Revenge* as a natural gratification, of which every man is entitled to look forward to the enjoyment; and which, after the establishment of the political union, every man has a right to insist upon at the hands of the criminal magistrate. Such, in particular, seems to be the opinion of Mr. Bentham, and of his very ingenious and eloquent commentator, M. Dumont. "Toute espèce de satisfaction entrainant une peine pour le délinquant, produit naturellement un plaisir de vengeance pour la partie lésée. Ce plaisir est un gain. Il rappelle la parabole de Samson. C'est le miel recueilli dans la gueule du lion. Produit sans frais, résultat net d'une opération nécessaire à d'autres titres, c'est une jouissance à cultiver comme toute autre; car le plaisir de la vengeance, considéré abstraitement, n'est comme tout autre plaisir, qu'un bien en lui-même. Il est innocent tant qu'il se renferme dans les bornes de la loi; il ne devient criminel qu'au moment où il les franchit. Utile à l'individu, ce mobile est même utile au public, ou pour mieux dire nécessaire; c'est cette satisfaction vindicative qui délie la langue des témoins; c'est elle qui anime l'accusateur, et l'engage au service de la justice, malgré les embarras, les dépenses, les inimitiés auxquelles il s'expose. C'est elle qui surmonte la pitié publique dans la punition des coupables . . . .

"Je sais bien que les moralistes communs, toujours dupés de mots, ne sauroient entrer dans cette vérité. L'esprit de vengeance est odieux; toute satisfaction puisée dans cette source est vicieuse; la pardon des injures est la plus belle des vertus. Sans doute, les caractères implacables, qu' aucune satisfaction n'adoucit, sont odieux, et doivent l'être. L'oubli des injures est une vertu nécessaire à l'humanité, mais c'est une vertu quand la justice a fait son œuvre, quand elle a fourni ou refusé une satisfaction. Avant cela, oublier les injures, c'est inviter à en commettre; ce n'est pas être l'ami,

mais l'ennemi de la societé. Qu'est-ce que la méchanceté pourroit désirer de plus qu'un arrangement où les offences seroient toujours suivies de pardon." *

The observations above quoted from Butler, Kames, and Smith, will at once point out the limitations with which this passage must be understood, and will furnish a triumphant reply to it where it departs from the truth.

* Bentham de la Satisfaction Vindicative. Trad. par Dumont.

BOOK SECOND.

OF OUR RATIONAL* AND GOVERNING PRINCIPLES OF ACTION.

CHAPTER FIRST.

OF A PRUDENTIAL REGARD TO OUR OWN HAPPINESS, OR, WHAT IS COMMONLY CALLED BY MORALISTS, THE PRINCIPLE OF SELF-LOVE.

THE constitution of man, if it were composed merely of the *active principles* hitherto mentioned, would, in some important respects, be analogous to that of the brutes. His *reason*, however, renders his nature and condition, on the whole, essentially different from theirs; and, by elevating him to the rank of *a moral agent*, distinguishes him from the lower animals still more remarkably than by the superiority it imparts to his intellectual endowments.

Of this want of reason in the brutes, it is an obvious result, that they are incapable of looking forward to *consequences*, or of comparing together the different gratifications of which they are susceptible; and, accordingly, as far as we can perceive, they yield to every present impulse. Among the inhabitants of this globe it is the exclusive prerogative of man, as an intelligent being, to take a comprehensive survey of his various principles of action, and to form plans of conduct for the attainment of his favorite objects. He is possessed, therefore, of the power of *self-government;* for how could a plan of conduct be conceived and carried into execution without a power of refusing occasionally to particular active principles the gratification which they demand?

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* To various active principles which have been already under our consideration, such, for instance, as the desire of knowledge, the desire of esteem, pity to the distressed, &c. &c. the epithet *rational* may undoubtedly be applied in one sense with propriety, as they exclusively belong to rational beings; but they are yet of a nature essentially different from those active principles of which we are now to treat, and which I have distinguished by the title of *Rational and Governing*. My reasons for using this language will appear from the sequel.

This difference between the *animal* and the *rational* natures is well and concisely described by Seneca in the following words: "*Animalibus pro ratione impetus; homini pro impetu ratio.*" *

According to the particular active principle which influences habitually a man's conduct, his character receives its denomination of *covetous, ambitious, studious, or voluptuous;* and his conduct is more or less systematical as he adheres to his general plan with steadiness or inconstancy.

It is hardly necessary for me to remark how much a man's success in his favourite pursuit depends on the systematical steadiness with which he keeps his object in view. That an uncommon measure of this quality often supplies, to a great degree, the place of genius, and that, where it is wanting, the most splendid endowments are of little value, are facts which have been often insisted on by philosophers, and which are confirmed to us by daily experience. The effects of this concentration of the attention to one particular end on the developement and improvement of the intellectual powers in general have not been equally taken notice of. They are, however, extremely remarkable, as every person will readily acknowledge, who compares the sagacity and penetration of those individuals who have enjoyed its advantages, with the weakness and incapacity and dissipation of thought produced by an undecided choice among the various pursuits which human life presents to us. Even the systematical voluptuary, while he commands a much greater variety of sensual indulgences, and continues them to a much more advanced age than the thoughtless profligate, seldom fails to give a certain degree of cultivation to his understanding, by employing his faculties habitually in one direction.

The only exception perhaps, which can be mentioned to this last remark, occurs in the case of those men whose leading principle of action is VANITY, and who, as their rule of conduct is borrowed from without, must,

* Seneca, II. de Ira. 16.

in consequence of this very circumstance, be perpetually wavering and inconsistent in their pursuits. Accordingly, it will be found that such men, although they have frequently performed splendid actions, have seldom risen to eminence in any one particular career, unless when by a rare concurrence of accidental circumstances this career has been steadily pointed out to them, through the whole of their lives, by public opinion.

"Alcibiades," says a French writer, "was a man not of ambition, but of vanity,—a man whose ruling passion was to make a noise, and to furnish matter of conversation to the Athenians. He possessed the *genius* of a great man, but his *soul*, the springs of which were too much slackened to urge him to constant application, could not elevate him, but by starts, to pursuits worthy of his powers. I can scarcely bring myself to believe that a man, whose versatility was such as to enable him, when in Sparta, to assume the severe manners of a Spartan, and, when in Ionia, to indulge in the refined voluptuousness of an Ionian, had received from nature the *stamina* of a great character." *

To what has been now observed in favor of systematical views in the conduct of life, it may be added, that they are incomparably more conducive to *happiness* than a course of action influenced merely by occasional inclination and appetite. Lord Shaftesbury goes so far as to assert, that even the man who is uniformly and systematically bad enjoys *more happiness* (perhaps he would have been nearer the truth if he had contented himself with saying that he suffers less misery) than one of a more mixed and more inconsistent character. "It is the thorough profligate knave alone, the complete unnatural villian, who can any way bid for happiness with the honest man. True interest is wholly on one side or on the other. All between is inconsistency, irresolution, remorse, vexation, and an ague fit,—from hot to

* "Ce n'étoit pas un *ambitieux*, mais un homme *vain* qui vouloit faire du bruit, et occuper les Athéniens. Il avoit *l'esprit* d'un grand homme; mais son *âme*, dont les ressorts amollis étoient devenus incapables d'une application constante, ne pouvoit s'élever au grand que par boutade. J'ai bien de la peine à croire, qu'un homme assez souple pour être à Sparte aussi dur et aussi sevère qu'un Spartiate; dans l'Ionie aussi recherché dans les plaisirs qu'un Ionien, fût propre à faire un grand homme." —(Quoted by Warburton in *his note on Pope's* Character of the Duke of Wharton.)

cold,—from one passion to another quite contary,—a perpetual discord of life, and an alternate disquiet and self-dislike. The only rest or repose must be through *one* determined considerate resolution, which, when once taken, must be courageously kept, and the passions and affections brought under obedience to it,—the temper steeled and hardened to the mind, the disposition to the judgment. Both must agree, else all must be disturbance and confusion." *

To the same purpose Horace:

> "Quanto constantior idem
> In vitiis, tanto levius miser ac prior illo,
> Qui jam contento, jam laxo, fune laboret." †

Of the state of a mind originally possessed of the most splendid endowments, but where every thing had been suffered to run into anarchy from the want of some controlling and steady principle of action, a masterly picture is drawn by Cicero in the following account of Catiline.

"Utebatur hominibus improbis multis, et quidem optimis se viris deditum esse simulabat; erant apud illum illecebræ libidinum multæ; erant etiam industriæ quidam stimuli ac laboris: flagrabant libidinis vitia apud illum; vigebant etiam studia rei militaris: neque ego unquam fuisse tale monstrum in terris ullum puto, tam ex contrariis diversisque inter se pugnantibus naturæ studiis cupiditatibusque conflatum. Quis clarioribus viris quodam tempore jucundior? quis turpioribus conjunctior? quis civis meliorum partium aliquando? quis tetrior hostis huic civitati? quis in voluptatibus inquinatior? quis in laboribus patientior? quis in rapacitate avarior? quis in largitione effusior?" ‡

In a person of this description, whatever indications of genius and ability he may discover, and whatever may be the great qualities he possesses, there is undoubtedly some tendency to insanity, which, if it were not the radical *source* of the evil, could hardly fail, sooner or later, to be the *effect* of a perpetual conflict be-

* Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour, Part iv. sect. 1.
† Hor. Sat. vii. Lib. ii.
‡ *Oratio pro M. Cœlio*, Sect. v. and vi.

tween different and discordant passions. And, accordingly, this is the idea which Sallust seems to have formed of this extraordinary man. "His eyes," he observes, "had a disagreeable glare; his complexion was pale; his walk sometimes quick, sometimes slow; and his general appearance indicated a discomposure of mind approaching to madness."

I would not be understood to insinuate by this last observation, than in every case in which we observe a conduct apparently inconsistent and irregular we are entitled to conclude all at once, that it proceeds from accidental humor, or from a disordered understanding. The knowledge of a man's ruling passion is often a key to what appeared, on a superficial view, to be perfectly inexplicable. Some excellent reflections on this subject are to be found in the first of Pope's Moral Essays, where they are most happily and forcibly illustrated by the character of the Duke of Wharton.

"Search, then, the ruling passion: There alone
The wild are constant, and the cunning known;
The fool consistent, and the false sincere;
Priests, princes, women, no dissemblers here.
This clue once found unravels all the rest,
The prospect clears, and Wharton stands confest.
Wharton, the scorn and wonder of our days,
Whose ruling passion was the lust of praise.
Born with whate'er could win it from the wise,
Women and fools must like him, or he dies."

* * * * *

"Ask you why Wharton broke through every rule,
'T was all for fear the knaves should call him fool.
Nature well known, no prodigies remain,
Comets are regular and Wharton plain."

I have only to add to these observations of Pope, that I believe the inconsistencies he describes are chiefly to be found in the conduct of men whose ruling principle of action is vanity. I already remarked, that while every other principle which gains an ascendant over the rest has a tendency to *systematize* our course of action, vanity has, on the contrary, a tendency to *disorganize* it, leading us always to look abroad for our rule of conduct, and thereby rendering it as wavering and inconsistent as the opinions and fashions of man-

kind. Where vanity, therefore, is the ruling passion of any individual, a want of system may be regarded as a necessary consequence of his general character.

From the foregoing considerations it sufficiently appears how much the nature of man is discriminated from that of the brutes, in consequence of the comprehensive view which his reason enables him to take of his different principles of action, and of the deliberate choice he has it in his power to make of the general plan of conduct he is to pursue. There is another, however, and a very important respect, in which the rational nature differs from the animal, that it is able to form the notion of *happiness*, or what is good for it upon the whole, and to deliberate about the most effectual means of attaining it. It is owing to this distinguishing prerogative of our species that we can avail ourselves of our past experience in avoiding those enjoyments which we know will be succeeded by suffering, and in submitting to lesser evils which we know are to be instrumental in procuring us a greater accession of good. "Sed inter hominem et belluam" (says Cicero) "hoc maximè interest, quod hæc tantùm quantùm sensu movetur, ad id solum quod adest, quodque præsens est, se accommodat, paullulum admodum sentiens præteritum aut futurum. Homo autem, quoniam rationis est particeps, per quam consequentia cernit, causas rerum videt, earumque prægressus et antecessiones non ignorat; similitudines comparat, et rebus præsentibus adjungit atque annectit futuras; facile totius vitæ cursum videt, ad eamque degendam preparat res necessarias." *

It is implied in the very idea of *happiness* that it is a desirable object, and therefore self-love is an active principle very different from those which have been hitherto considered. These, for aught we know, may be the effect of arbitrary appointment, and they have accordingly been called *implanted* principles, or principles resulting from a positive accommodation of the constitution of man to the objects with which he is surrounded. The desire of happiness may be called a

* De Off. Lib. i. iv.

rational principle of action, being peculiar to a rational nature, and inseparably connected with it. It is impossible to conceive a being capable of forming the notions of happiness and misery, to whom the one shall not be an object of desire, and the other of aversion.*

In prefixing to this chapter the title of *self-love*, the ordinary language of modern philosophy has been followed, as I am always anxious to avoid unnecessary innovations in the use of words. The expression, however, is exceptionable, for it suggests an analogy (where there is none in fact) between that regard which every rational being must necessarily have to his own happiness and those benevolent affections which attach us to our fellow creatures. There is surely nothing in the former of these principles analogous to the affection of *love*; and, therefore, to call it by the appellation of *self-love* is to suggest a *theory* with respect to its nature, and a theory which has no foundation in truth.

The word *φιλαυτία* was used among the Greeks nearly in the same sense, and introduced similar inaccuracies into their reasonings concerning the principle of morals. In our language, however, the impropriety does not stop here; for not only is the phrase *self-love* used as synonymous with the desire of happiness, but it is often confounded (in consequence of an unfortunate connexion in their etymology) with the word *selfishness*, which certainly, in strict propriety, denotes a very different disposition of mind. In proof of this it is sufficient to observe, that the word *selfishness* is always used in an unfavorable sense, whereas *self-love*, or the desire of happiness, is inseparable from our nature as rational and sensitive beings.

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* From this constitution of the human mind, as at once *sensitive* and *rational*, arise necessarily the emotions of hope and fear, joy and sorrow. The pleasurable emotion arising from good in expectation is called *hope*, the painful emotion arising from apprehended evil is called *fear*. The words *joy* and *sorrow* are more general, applicable alike to the emotions arising from the *experience* and from the *apprehension* of good and of evil. The interest which our benevolent affections give us in the concerns of others inspire us (more particularly in the case of those to whom we are fondly attached) with emotions analogous to those which have a reference to our own condition.

The laws which regulate these emotions connected with the sensitive nature of man deserve a careful examination; but the subject does not fall under the present part of my plan.

The mistaken notion that vice consists in an excessive self-love, naturally arose from the application of the terms *self-love*, or *φιλαυτία*, to express the desire of happiness. As benevolence, or the love of mankind, constitutes, in the opinion of many moralists, the whole of virtue, so it was not unnatural to conclude, that the love of ourselves (which this mode of speaking seems to contrast with benevolence) was the radical source of all the vices. And, accordingly, this conclusion has been adopted by many writers, both ancient and modern. "If we scan," says Dr. Barrow, "the particular nature, and search into the original causes of the several kinds of naughty dispositions in our souls, and of miscarriages in our lives, we shall find inordinate self-love to be a main ingredient, and a common source of them all, so that a divine of great name had some reason to affirm, *that original sin* (or that innate distemper from which men generally become so very prone to evil and averse to good) doth consist in self-love disposing us to all kinds of irregularity and excess." In this passage, Dr. Barrow refers to the opinion of Zuinglius, who has expressly called self-love the original or radical sin in our nature. "Est ergo ista ad peccandum amore sui propensio, peccatum originale." *

It is chiefly, however, from some of our English moralists that this notion concerning the nature of vice has derived its authority; and the plausibility of their reasonings on the subject has been much aided by that indiscriminate use of the words *self-love* and *selfishness*, of which I already took notice.

I shall afterwards have occasion to show that vice does not consist in an excessive regard to our own happiness. At present I shall only remark, in addition to what was said above with respect to the distinction between the meanings of the words *self-love* and *selfishness*, that the former is so far from expressing any thing blameable, that it denotes a principle of action which we never sacrifice to any of our implanted appetites, desires, or affections, without incurring remorse and self-condem-

* Sermon on Self-Love.

nation. When we see, for example, a man enslaved by his animal appetites, so far from considering him as under the influence of an excessive self-love, we pity and despise him for neglecting the higher enjoyments which are placed within his reach. Accordingly, those very authors who tell us that vice consists in an inordinate self-love are forced to confess that there are some senses of the word in which it expresses a worthy and commendable principle of action. "Reason," says Dr. Barrow, "dictateth and prescribeth to us, that we should have a sober regard to our true good and welfare; to our best interest and solid content; to that, which (all things being rightly stated, considered, and computed) will in the end prove most beneficial and satisfactory to us; a self-love working in prosecution of such things, common sense cannot but allow and approve."—*Τὸν μὲν ἀγαθὸν*, says Aristotle, *δεῖ φίλαυτον εἶναι.** And in another passage of the same chapter, *δόξειε δὲ ὁ τοιοῦτος εἶναι μᾶλλον φίλαυτος.*

As a further proof that selfishness is not synonymous with the desire of happiness, it may be observed, that although we apply the epithet *selfish* to avarice and to low private sensuality, we never apply it to the desire of knowledge, or to the pursuits of virtue, which are certainly sources of more exquisite pleasure than riches or sensuality can bestow.

> "Yet at the darkened eye, the withered face,
> The hoary head I never will repine:
> But spare, O time! whate'er of mental grace,
> Of candor, love, or sympathy divine,
> Whate'er of fancy's ray, or friendship's flame was mine."

Such a wish is surely dictated by the most rational view of our real interest; and yet no man will pretend that it contains any thing inconsistent with a generous and heroic mind. Had it been directed to wealth, to long life, or to the preservation of youthful beauty and vigor, it would have been universally condemned as selfish and contemptible.

This restriction of the term *selfishness* to a particular

* Ethic. Nic. Lib. ix. Cap. 8.

class of human pursuits is taken notice of by Dr. Ferguson in his Essay on Civil Society, and seems to be considered by him as originating in a capricious, or rather in an inconsistent, use of language. "It is somewhat remarkable, that notwithstanding men value themselves so much on qualities of the mind, on parts, learning, and wit, on courage, generosity, and honor, those men are still supposed to be in the highest degree selfish, or attentive to themselves, who are most careful about animal life, and who are least mindful of rendering that life an object worthy of care. It will be difficult, however, to tell why a good understanding, a resolute and generous mind, should not, by every man in his senses, be reckoned as much parts of himself as either his stomach or his palate, and much more than his estate or his dress. The epicure who consults his physician how he may restore his relish for food, and, by creating an appetite, renew his enjoyment, might at least, with an equal regard to himself, consult how he may strengthen his affection to a parent or a child, to his country, or to mankind; and it is probably that an appetite of this sort would prove a source of enjoyment no less than the former."

Of the difficulty here remarked by Dr. Ferguson, the solution appears to me to be this, that the word *selfishness*, when applied to a pursuit, has no reference to the *motive* from which the pursuit proceeds, but to the *effect* it has on the conduct. Neither our animal appetites, nor avarice, nor curiosity, nor the desire of moral improvement, arise from self-love, but some of these active principles disconnect us with society more than others; and consequently, though they do not indicate a greater regard for our own happiness, they betray a greater unconcern about the happiness of our neighbours. The pursuits of the miser have no mixture whatever of the social affections; on the contrary, they continually lead him to state his own interest in opposition to that of other men. The enjoyments of the sensualist all expire within his own person; and, therefore, whoever is habitually occupied in the search of them must of necessity neglect the duties which he owes to mankind.

It is otherwise with the desire of knowledge, which is always accompanied with a strong desire of social communication, and with the love of moral excellence, which, in its practical tendency, coincides so remarkably with benevolence, that many authors have attempted to resolve the one principle into the other. How far their conclusion, in this instance, is a necessary consequence of the premises from which it is deduced will appear hereafter.

The foregoing observations coincide so remarkably with a passage in Aristotle's Ethics, that I am tempted to quote it at length in the excellent English translation of Dr. Gillies. After stating the same inconsistencies in our language about self-love, which Dr. Ferguson has pointed out, Aristotle proceeds thus:—

"These contradictions cannot be reconciled but by distinguishing the different senses in which man is said to love himself. Those who reproach self-love as a vice consider it only as it appears in worldlings and voluptuaries, who arrogate to themselves more than their due share of wealth, power, or pleasure. Such things are to the multitude the objects of earnest concern and eager contention, because the multitude regards them as prizes of the highest value, and, in endeavouring to attain them, strives to gratify its passion at the expense of its reason. This kind of self-love, which belongs to the contemptible multitude, is doubtless obnoxious to blame, and in this acceptation the word is generally taken. But should a man assume a preeminence in exercising justice, temperance, and other virtues, though such a man has really more true self-love than the multitude, yet nobody would impute this affection to him as a crime. Yet he takes to himself the fairest and greatest of all goods, and those the most acceptable to the ruling principle in his nature, which is properly himself, in the same manner as the sovereignty in every community is that which most properly constitutes the state. He is said, also, to have, or not to have, the command of himself, just as this principle bears sway, or as it is subject to control; and those acts are considered as most voluntary which proceed from this

legislative or sovereign power. Whoever cherishes and gratifies this ruling part of his nature is strictly and peculiarly a lover of himself, but in a quite different sense from that in which self-love is regarded as a matter of reproach; for all men approve and praise an affection calculated to produce the greatest private and the greatest public happiness; whereas they disapprove and blame the vulgar kind of self-love as often hurtful to others, and always ruinous to those who indulge it." *

* Aristotle's Ethics, Book ix. chap. 8.

CHAPTER SECOND.

OF THE MORAL FACULTY.

General Observations on the Moral Faculty, tending chiefly to show that it is an original principle of our nature, and not resolvable into any other principle or principles more general.

As some authors have supposed that vice consists in an excessive regard to our own happiness, so others have gone into the opposite extreme, by representing virtue as merely *a matter of prudence*, and a sense of duty but another name for *a rational self-love*. This view of the subject was far from being unnatural; for we find that these two principles lead in general to the same course of action; and we have every reason to believe, that, if our knowledge of the universe was more extensive, they would be found to do so in all instances whatever. Accordingly, by many of the best of the ancient moralists, our *sense of duty* was considered as resolvable into self-love, and the whole of *ethics* was reduced to this question, *What is the supreme good?* or, in other words, What is most conducive, on the whole, to our happiness? *

That we have, however, a sense of duty, which is not resolvable into a regard to our happiness, appears from various considerations.

(1.) There are, in all languages, words equivalent to *duty* and to *interest*, which men have constantly distin-

* The same opinion has been adopted by various philosophers of the first eminence in England, and it has long been the prevailing system on the continent. From the following passage in one of D'Alembert's Letters to the King of Prussia, it appears to have been considered both by the writer and by his royal correspondent as a fundamental principle in morals. "Je n'ai pas en effet perdu un moment pour lire cet excellent mémoire; et je puis, Sire, assurer à V. M. que je suis absolument de son avis sur les principes qui doivent servir de base à la morale. Si V. M. veut prendre la peine de jeter les yeux sur mes Elémens de Philosophie, elle verra que j'y indique comme la source de la morale et du bonheur, 'la liaison intime de notre véritable interêt avec l'accomplissement de nos devoirs,' et que je regarde l'amour éclairé de nous-mêmes comme le principe de tout sacrifice morale."—*Œuvres Post. du Roi de Prusse*, Tom. XIV. p. 99.

guished in their signification. They coincide in general in their applications, but they convey very different ideas. When I wish to persuade a man to a particular action, I address some of my arguments to a sense of duty, and others to the regard he has to his own interest. I endeavour to show him that it is not only his duty, but his interest to act in the way that I recommend to him.

This distinction was expressed among the Roman moralists by the words *honestum* and *utile*. Of the former Cicero says, "quod vere dicimus, etiamsi a nullo laudetur, naturâ esse laudabile." *

The τὸ καλὸν among the Greeks corresponds, when applied to the conduct, to the *honestum* of the Romans.† Dr. Reid remarks that the word καθῆκον (*officium*) extended both to the *honestum* and the *utile*, and comprehended every action performed either from a sense of duty, or from an enlightened regard to our true interest. In English we use the word *reasonable* with the same latitude, and indeed almost exactly in the same sense in which Cicero defines *officium*: "Id quod cur factum sit ratio probabilis reddi potest." In treating of such *offices* Cicero, and Panætius before him, first points out those that are recommended to us by our love of the *honestum*, and next those that are recommended by our regard to the *utile*.

This distinction between a sense of duty and a regard to interest is acknowledged even by men whose moral principles are not the purest, nor the most consistent. What unlimited confidence do we repose in the conduct of one whom we know to be *a man of honor*, even in those cases in which he acts out of the view of the world, and where the strongest temptations of worldly interest concur to lead him astray! We know that his heart would revolt at the idea of any thing base or unworthy. Dr. Reid observes that what we call *honor*, considered as a principle of conduct, "is only another name for a regard to duty, to rectitude, to propriety of conduct." ‡ This, I think, is going rather too far; for,

* De Offic. Lib. i. 4.
† Reid's Essays on the Active Powers. Essay 3d, Chap. 5.
‡ Essays on the Active Powers, p. 230. 4to. Edit.

although the two principles coincide *in general* in the direction they give to our conduct, they do not coincide always; the principle of *honor* being liable, from its nature and origin, to be most unhappily perverted in its applications by a bad education and the influence of fashion. At the same time, Dr. Reid's remark is perfectly in point, for the principle of honor is plainly grafted on a sense of duty, and necessarily presupposes its existence.

Dr. Paley, one of the most zealous advocates for the selfish system of morals, admits the fact on which the foregoing argument proceeds, but endeavours to evade the conclusion by means of a theory so extraordinary, that I shall state it in his own words. "There is always understood to be a difference between an act of *prudence* and an act of *duty*. Thus, if I distrusted a man who owed me a sum of money, I should reckon it an act of prudence to get another person bound with him; but I should hardly call it an act of duty. On the other hand it would be thought a very unusual and loose kind of language to say, that, as I had made such a promise, it was *prudent* to perform it; or, that, as my friend, when he went abroad, placed a box of jewels in my hands, it was *prudent* in me to preserve it for him till he returned.

"Now, in what, you will ask, does the difference consist, inasmuch as, according to our account of the matter, both in the one case and the other, in acts of duty as well as acts of prudence, we consider solely what we ourselves shall gain or lose by the act?

"The difference, and the only difference, is this, that, in the one case we consider what we shall gain or lose in the present world; in the other case, we consider also what we shall lose or gain in the world to come."

On this curious passage I have no comment to offer. A sufficient answer to it may, I trust, be derived from the following reasonings. In the meantime, it will be allowed to be at least one presumption of an essential distinction between the notions of duty and of interest, that there are different words to express these notions in all languages, and that the most illiterate of mankind are in no danger of confounding them together.

(2.) But, secondly, the emotions arising from the contemplation of what is right and wrong in conduct are different both in degree and kind from those which are produced by a calm regard to our own happiness. Of this, I think, nobody can doubt, who considers with attention the operation of our moral principles in cases where their effects are not counteracted or modified by a combination with some other principles of our nature. In judging, for example, of *our own* conduct, our moral powers are warped by the influence of self-partiality and self-deceit; and accordingly, we daily see men commit, without any remorse, actions, which, if performed by another person, they would have regarded with the liveliest sentiments of indignation and abhorrence. Even in *this last case* the experiment is not always perfectly fair; for where the actor has been previously known to us our judgment is generally affected, in a greater or less degree, by our prepossessions or by our prejudices. In contemplating the characters exhibited in histories and in novels, the emotions we feel are the immediate and the genuine result of our moral constitution; and although they may be stronger in some men than in others, yet they are in all distinctly perceivable, even in those whose want of temper and of candor render them scarcely conscious of the distinction of right and wrong in the conduct of their neighbours and acquaintance. And hence probably (we may observe by the way) the chief origin of the pleasure we experience in this sort of reading. The representations of *the stage*, however, afford the most favorable of all opportunities for studying the moral constitution of man. As the mind is here perfectly indifferent to the parties whose character and conduct are the subject of the fable, the judgments it forms can hardly fail to be impartial, and the feelings arising from these judgments are much more conspicuous in their external effects than if the play were perused in the closet; for every species of enthusiasm operates more forcibly when men are collected in a crowd. On such an occasion the slightest hint suggested by the poet raises to transport the passions of the audience, and forces involuntary tears from men of the greatest reserve and

the most correct sense of propriety. The crowd does not *create* the feeling nor even *alter its nature*, it only enables us to remark its operation *on a greater scale*. In these cases we have surely no time for reflection; and indeed the emotions of which we are conscious are such as no speculations about our own interest could possibly excite. It is in situations of this kind that we most completely forget ourselves as individuals, and feel the most sensibly the existence of those moral ties by which Heaven has been pleased to bind mankind together.

(3.) Although Philosophers have shown that a sense of duty and an enlightened regard to our own happiness conspire in most instances to give the same direction to our conduct, so as to put it beyond a doubt, that even in this world, a virtuous life is true wisdom, yet this is a truth by no means obvious to the common sense of mankind, but deduced from an extensive view of human affairs, and an accurate investigation of the *remote consequences* of our different actions. It is from experience and reflection, therefore, we learn the connexion between virtue and happiness; and consequently, the great lessons of morality which are obvious to the capacity of all mankind could never have been suggested to them merely by a regard to their own interest. Indeed, this discovery which experience makes to us of the connexion between virtue and happiness, both in the case of individuals and of political societies, furnishes one of the most pleasing subjects of speculation to the philosopher, as it places in a striking point of view the unity of design which takes place in our constitution, and opens encouraging and delightful prospects with respect to the moral government of the Deity.

It is a just and beautiful observation of Dr. Reid, that "although wise men have concluded that virtue is the only road to happiness, this conclusion is founded chiefly upon the natural respect men have for virtue, and the good and happiness that is intrinsic to it, and arises from the love of it. If we suppose a man altogether destitute of this principle, who considered virtue as only the means to another end, there is no reason to think that he would ever take it to be the road to hap-

piness, but would wander for ever seeking this object where it is not to be found."

This observation leads me to remark further, that the man who is most successful in the pursuit of happiness is not he who proposes it to himself as the great object of his pursuit. To do so, and to be continually occupied with schemes on the subject, would fill the mind with anxious conjectures about futurity, and with perplexing calculations of the various chances of good and evil. Whereas the man whose ruling principle of action is a sense of duty conducts himself in the business of life with boldness, consistency, and dignity, and finds himself rewarded with that happiness which so often eludes the pursuit of those who exert every faculty of the mind in order to attain it.

Something very similar to this takes place with regard to nations. From the earliest accounts of mankind, politicians have been employed in devising schemes of national aggrandizement, and have proceeded on the supposition, that the prosperity of their own country could only be advanced by depressing all others around them. It has now been shown with irresistible evidence that those views were founded on mistake, and that the prosperity of a country is intimately connected with that of its neighbours; insomuch that the enlightened statesman, instead of embarrassing himself with the care of a machine whose parts were become too complicated for any human comprehension, finds his labor reduced to the simple business of observing the rules of justice and humanity. It is remarkable, that, long before the date of these profound speculations in politics, for which we are indebted to Mr. Smith and to the French economists, Fenelon was led merely by the goodness of his heart, and by his speculative conviction of the intimate connexion between virtue and happiness under the moral government of God, to recommend a free trade as an expedient measure in policy, and to reprobate the mean ideas of national jealousy as calculated to frustrate the very ends to which they are supposed to be subservient. Indeed I am inclined to think, that, as in conducting the affairs of private life, "the

integrity of the upright man" is his surest guide, so in managing the affairs of a great empire; a strong sense of justice, and an ardent zeal for the rights and for the happiness of mankind, will go further to form a great and successful statesman than the most perfect acquaintance with political details, unassisted by the direction of these inward monitors.

An author, too, in our own country, of sound judgment, and of very accurate commercial information, and who was one of the first in England who turned the attention of the public to those liberal notions concerning trade which are now become so prevalent, acknowledges that it was by a train of reasoning *a priori* that he was led to his conclusions. "Can we suppose, says he, "that Divine Providence has really constituted the order of things in such a sort, as to make the rule of natural self-preservation inconsistent with the fundamental principle of universal benevolence, and the doing as we would be done by? For my own part, I must confess, I never could conceive that an all wise, just and benevolent being would contrive one part of his plan to be so contradictory to the other as here supposed,—that is, would lay us under one obligation as to morals, and another as to trade; or, in short, to make that to be our duty which is not, upon the whole, and generally speaking, (even without the consideration of a future state) our interest likewise.

"Therefore I *concluded a priori* that there must be some flaw or other in the preceding arguments, plausible as they seem, and great as they are on the foot of human authority. For though the appearance of things at first sight makes for this conclusion, 'that poor countries must inevitably carry away the trade from rich ones, and consequently impoverish them,' the fact itself cannot be so." *

(4.) The same conclusion is strongly confirmed by *the early period of life* at which our moral judgments make their appearance, long before children are able to form *the general notion of happiness*, and, indeed, in the

* Dean Tucker's Tracts on Political and Commercial Subjects.

very infancy of their reason. It is astonishing how powerfully a child of sensibility may be affected by any simple narration calculated to rouse the feelings of pity, of generosity, or of indignation, and how very early some minds formed in a happy mould are inspired with a consciousness of the dignity of their nature, and glow with the enthusiasm of virtue. Dr. Beattie has beautifully painted these openings of the moral character in the description he gives of the effect produced on his young Edwin by the fine old ballad of the Babes in the Wood.

"But when to horror his amazement rose,
A gentler strain the beldame would rehearse,
A tale of rural life, a tale of woes,
The orphan babes and guardian uncle fierce.
Oh cruel! will no pang of pity pierce
That heart, by lust of lucre sear'd to stone?
For sure, if aught of virtue last, or verse,
To latest times shall tender souls bemoan
Those helpless orphan babes by thy fell arts undone.

"See where with berries smear'd, with brambles torn,
The babes now famish'd lay them down to die;
'Midst the wild howl of darksome woods forlorn,
Folded in one another's arms they lie,
Nor friend, nor stranger, hears their dying cry;
'For from the town the man returns no more.'
But thou, who Heaven's just vengeance dar'st defy,
This deed with fruitless tears shalt soon deplore,
When death lays waste thy house, and flames consume thy store.

"A stifled smile of stern vindictive joy,
Brighten'd one moment Edwin's starting tear;
—'But why should gold man's feeble mind decoy,
And innocence thus die by doom severe?'—
Oh! Edwin, while thy heart is yet sincere,
The assaults of discontent and doubt repel;
Dark even at noon-tide is our mortal sphere;
But let us hope—to doubt is to rebel,—
Let us exult in hope that all shall yet be well."

The reasonings already stated seem to me to furnish a sufficient refutation of the selfish theory of morals, as it is explained by the greater number of the philosophers who have adopted it; but, before leaving the subject, it is necessary for me to take notice of a doctrine *fun*damentally the same, though modified in such a man-

ner as to elude *some* of the foregoing arguments,—a doctrine which has been maintained of late by various English writers of note, and which, I suspect, is at present the prevailing system in that part of the island. According to this doctrine we do, indeed, in many cases approve or disapprove of particular actions without any reference to our own interest *at the time;* but it is asserted that it was views of self interest which originally created these moral sentiments, and led us to *associate* agreeable or disagreeable emotions with human conduct. The origin of the moral faculty, in the opinion of these theorists, is precisely analogous to that of *avarice*, or of any of our other factitious principles of action. Money, it will not be disputed, is *at first* desired merely on account of its subservience to the gratification of our natural desires; but, in process of time, the association of ideas leads us to regard it as a desirable thing in itself, without any reference to this subservience or utility, and in many cases it continues to be coveted with an increasing passion, long after we have lost all relish for the enjoyments it enables us to purchase. In the same manner a particular action which was at first approved or disapproved of, merely on account of its supposed tendency with respect to our own interest, comes, in process of time, to be approved or disapproved of, the moment it is mentioned, and without any reflection on our part that we are able to recollect. Thus, without abandoning the old selfish principles, they contrive to evade the force of the arguments founded by Hutcheson and others on the instantaneousness with which our moral judgments are commonly pronouced. This, if I am not mistaken, is the theory of Dr. Law, of Dr. Hartley, of Dr. Priestley, of Dr. Paley, and of Dr. Paley's great oracle in philosophy, the author of the *Light of Nature Pursued.*

I am ready to acknowledge that this refinement on the old selfish system gives it a degree of plausibility which it did not originally possess, and obviates *one* of the objections to it formerly stated. But it must be remembered that this was not the *only* objection, and that there are several others which apply both to the old and new hypothesis with equal force.

Among these arguments, what I would lay the principal stress on is the degree of experience and reflection necessary for discovering the *tendency* of virtue to promote our happiness, compared with the very early period of life when the moral sentiments display themselves in their full vigor.

In answer to this, it may perhaps be alleged, that when once moral ideas have been formed by the process already described, they are caught by infants from their parents or preceptors by a sort of imitation, and without any reflection on their part. "There is nothing," says Dr. Paley, "which children imitate, or apply more readily, than expressions of affection or aversion, of approbation, hatred, resentment, and the like; and when these passions and expressions are once connected, (which they will soon be by the same association which unites words with their ideas) the passion will follow the expression, and attach upon the object to which the child has been accustomed to apply the epithet. In a word, when almost every thing else is learned by *imitation*, can we wonder to find the same cause concerned in the generation of our moral sentiments?"

The plausibility of this reasoning arises entirely from the address with which the author introduces *indirectly* a most important fact with respect to the human mind; a fact which, by engrossing the attention of the reader, is apt to prevent his perceiving, on a superficial view, its inapplicability to the point in dispute, or at least its insufficiency to establish in its full extent the conclusion which is deduced from it. That imitation and the association of ideas have a great influence on our moral judgments and emotions, more particularly in our early years, every man must be sensible who has reflected at all on the subject; and it is a fact which deserves the serious consideration of all who have any concern in the education of youth. But does it therefore follow that imitation and the association of ideas are sufficient to account for *the origin* of the power of moral perception, and for *the origin* of our notions of right and wrong? On the contrary, the tendency we have in the *infancy* of our reason to follow in our moral judgments

the example of those whom we love and reverence; the influence of association sometimes in guiding, and sometimes in misleading us in what we praise or blame, *presuppose* the existence of the power of moral judgment, and of the general notions of right and wrong. The power of these adventitious causes over the mind is so great, that there is perhaps no *particular* practice which we may not be trained to approve of or to condemn; but wherever this happens, the operation of these causes supposes us to be already in possession of some faculty by which we are capable of bestowing approbation or blame. It is worthy too of remark, that it is only with respect to *particular* practices that education is capable of misleading us; for even when education perverts the judgment, it produces its effect by employing the instrumentality of our moral principles. In many cases it will be found that it operates by combining *a number* of principles against *one;* by associating, for example, a number of worthy dispositions and amiable affections with habits which, if divested of such an alliance, would be regarded as mean and contemptible.

To all this we may add, that our speculative judgments concerning *truth* and *falsehood*, as well as our judgments concerning *right* and *wrong*, are liable to be influenced by imitation and the association of ideas. Even in mathematics, when a pupil of a tender age enters first on the study of the elements, his judgment leans not a little on that of his teacher, and he feels his confidence in the truth of his conclusions sensibly confirmed by his faith in the superior understanding of those whom he looks up to with respect. It is only by degrees that he emancipates himself from this dependence, and comes at last to perceive the irresistible force of demonstrative evidence; and yet it will not be inferred from this that the power of reasoning is the result of imitation or of habit. The conclusion mentioned above with respect to the power of moral judgment is equally erroneous.

The looseness and sophistry of Paley's reasonings on the subject of the moral faculty may be traced to the vague and indistinct conception he had formed of the

point in question. In proof of this I shall transcribe his own words from his Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy. It is necessary to premise, that he introduces his argument against the existence of a moral sense by quoting a story from Valerius Maximus, which I shall present to my readers in Dr. Paley's version.

"The father of Caius Toranius had been proscribed by the triumvirate. Caius Toranius coming over to the interests of that party, discovered to the officers who were in pursuit of his father's life the place where he concealed himself, and gave them withal a description by which they might distinguish his person when they found him. The old man, more anxious for the safety and fortunes of his son, than about the little that might remain of his own life, began immediately to inquire of the officers who seized him, whether his son was well? whether he had done his duty to the satisfaction of his generals? That son, replied one of the officers, so dear to thy affections, betrayed thee to us; by his information thou art apprehended and diest. The officer with this struck a poignard to his heart, and the unhappy parent fell, not so much affected by his fate, as by the means to which he owed it."

"Now," says Dr. Paley, "the question is, Whether, if this story were related to the wild boy caught some years ago in the woods of Hanover, or to a savage without experience and without instruction, cut off in his infancy from all intercouse with his species, and consequently under no possible influence of example, authority, education, sympathy, or habit, whether, I say, such a one would feel, upon the relation, any degree of that *sentiment of disapprobation of Toranius's conduct* which we feel, or not?

"They who maintain the existence of a moral sense, of innate maxims, of a natural conscience, that the love of virtue and hatred of vice are instinctive, or the perception of right and wrong intuitive, (all of which are only different ways of expressing the same opinion,) affirm that he would.

"They who deny the existence of a moral sense, &c. affirm that he would not.

"And upon this issue is joined." *

To those who are at all acquainted with the history of this dispute, it must appear evident that the question is here completely misstated; and that in the whole of Dr. Paley's subsequent argument on the subject, he combats a phantom of his own imagination. The opinion which he ascribes to his antagonists has been loudly and repeatedly disavowed by all the most eminent moralists who have disputed Locke's reasonings against *innate practical principles;* and is indeed so very obviously absurd, that it never could have been for a moment entertained by any person in his senses.

Did it ever enter into the mind of the wildest theorist to imagine that the sense of seeing would enable a man brought up from the moment of his birth in utter darkness, to form a conception of light and colors? But would it not be equally rash to conclude, from the extravagance of such a supposition, that the sense of seeing is not an original part of the human frame?

The above quotation from Paley forces me to remark further, that, in combating the supposition of a *moral sense,* he has confounded together, as *only different ways of expressing the same opinion,* a variety of systems, which are regarded by all our best philosophers, not only as essentially distinct, but as in some measure opposed to each other. The system of Hutcheson, for example, is identified with that of Cudworth, to which (as will afterwards appear) it stands in direct opposition. But although, in this instance, the author's logical discrimination does not appear to much advantage, the sweeping censure thus bestowed on so many of our most celebrated ethical theories has the merit of throwing a very strong light on that particular view of the subject which it is the aim of his reasoning to establish in contradiction to them all.

* Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy, B. i. Ch. v.

CHAPTER THIRD.

CONTINUATION OF THE SUBJECT.—EXAMINATION OF SOME OBJECTIONS TO THE FOREGOING CONCLUSIONS.

In the preceding observations I have endeavoured to prove that the moral faculty is an original principle of our constitution, which is not resolvable into any other principle or principles more general than itself; in particular, that it is not resolvable into self-love or a prudential regard to our own interest. In order, however, completely to establish the existence of the moral faculty as an essential and universal part of human nature, it is necessary to examine with attention the objections which have been stated to this conclusion by some writers, who were either anxious to display their ingenuity by accounting in a different manner for the origin of our moral ideas, or who wish to favor the cause of scepticism by explaining away the reality and immutability of moral distinctions.

Among these objections, that which merits the most careful consideration, from the characters of those by whom it is maintained, is founded on the possibility of explaining the fact without increasing the number of original principles in our constitution. The rules of morality, it has been supposed, were, in the first instance, brought to light by the sagacity of philosophers and politicians; and it is only in consequence of the influence of education that they appear to form an original part of the human frame. The diversity of opinions among different nations with respect to the morality of particular actions has been considered as a strong confirmation of this doctrine.

But the power of education, although great, is confined within certain limits. It is indeed much more extensive than philosophers once believed, as sufficiently appears from those modern discoveries, with respect to the distant parts of the globe, which have so wonderfully enlarged our knowledge of human nature, and

which show clearly that many sentiments and opinions, which had been formerly regarded as inseparable from the nature of man, are the results of accidental situation. If our forefathers, however, went into one extreme on this point, we seem to be at present in no small danger of going into the opposite one, by considering man as entirely a factitious being, that may be moulded into any form by education and fashion.

I have said that the power of education is confined within certain limits. The reason is obvious, for it is by cooperating with the natural principles of the mind that education produces its effects. Nay, this very susceptibility of education, which is acknowledged to belong universally to the race, presupposes the existence of certain principles which are common to all mankind.

The influence of education in diversifying the appearances which the moral constitution of man exhibits in different instances depends chiefly on that law of our constitution which was formerly called the association of ideas; and this law supposes, in every case, that there are opinions and feelings essential to the human frame, by a combination with which external circumstances lay hold of the mind, and adapt it to its accidental situation. What we daily see happen in the trifling article of dress may help us to conceive how the association of ideas operates in matters of more serious consequence. Fashion, it is well known, can reconcile us, in the cource of a few weeks, to the most absurd and fantastical ornament; but does it follow from this that fashion could create our ideas of beauty and elegance? During the time we have seen this ornament worn, it has been confined, in a great measure, to those whom we consider as models of taste, and has been gradually associated with the impressions produced by the real elegance of their appearence and manner. When it pleases by itself, the effect is not to be ascribed to the thing considered abstractedly, nor to any change which our general notions of beauty have undergone, but to the impressions with which it has been generally connected, and which it naturally recalls

to the mind. The case is nearly the same with our moral sentiments. A man of splendid virtues attracts some esteem also to his imperfections, and, if placed in a conspicuous situation, may corrupt the moral sentiments of the multitude in the same manner in which he may introduce an absurd or fantastical ornament by his whimsical taste in the articles of dress. The commanding influence of Cato's virtues seems to have produced somewhat of this effect on the minds of some of his admirers. He was accused, we are told, of intemperance in wine; nor do his apologists pretend altogether to deny the charge. "But," says one of them, "it would be much easier to prove that intemperance is a decent and respectable quality, than that Cato could be guilty of any vice." "Catoni ebrietas objecta est; et facilius efficiet, quisquis objecerit, hoc crimen honestum, quam turpem Catonem."

In general it may be remarked, that, as education may vary in particular cases the opinions of individuals with respect to the objects of taste, without being able to create our notions of beauty or deformity, of grandeur or meanness, so education may vary our sentiments with respect to particular actions, but could not create our notions of right and wrong, of merit and demerit. *

With respect to the historical facts which have been quoted as proofs that the moral judgments of mankind are entirely factitious, we may venture to assert in general, that none of them justify so very extravagant a conclusion; that a great part of them are the effects of misrepresentation; and that others lead to a conclusion directly the reverse of what has been drawn from them. It would hardly be necessary, in the present times, to examine them seriously, were it not for the authority which, in the opinion of many, they still continue to derive from the sanction of Mr. Locke.

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* It is observed by Condorcet in his Eloge of Euler, "*That, if we except the common maxims of morality*, there is no one truth which can boast of having been so generally adopted, or through such a succession of ages, as certain ridiculous and pernicious errors." The assertion, although not without some foundation in fact, is manifestly expressed by this author in terms too strong and unqualified. I quote it here chiefly on account of the remarkable concession which it involves in favor of *the fundamental principles of morality*;—a subject on which it has been generally *alleged by sceptical* writers, that our opinions are more liable, than on most others, *to be warped by the* influence of education and fashion.

"Have there not been whole nations," says this eminent philosopher, "and those of the most civilized people, among whom the exposing their children, and leaving them in the fields to perish by want or wild beasts, has been the practice, as little condemned or scrupled as the begetting them? Do they not still in some countries put them into the same graves with their mothers if they die in child-birth, or despatch them if a pretended astrologer declares them to have unhappy stars? And are there not places where, at a certain age, they kill or expose their *parents* without any remorse at all? Where, then, are our innate ideas of justice, piety, gratitude; or where is that universal consent that assures us there are such inbred rules?"

To this question of Locke's, so satisfactory an answer has been given by various writers, that it would be superfluous to enlarge on the subject here. It is sufficient to refer, *on the origin of infanticide*, to Mr. Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments;* and, *on the alleged impiety among some rude tribes of children towards their parents*, to Charron *Sur la Sagesse*, † and to an excellent note of Dr. Beattie's in his Essay on Fable and Romance. The reasonings of the two last writers are strongly confirmed by Mr. Ellis in his voyage for the Discovery of a North-West Passage, and by Mr. Curtis, (afterwards Sir Roger Curtis) in a paper containing *some particulars with respect to the country of Labradore*, published in the Philosophical Transactions for the year 1773.

In order to form a competent judgment on facts of this nature, it is necessary to attend to a variety of considerations which have been too frequently overlooked by philosophers; and, in particular, to make proper allowances for the three following:—1. For the different situations in which mankind are placed, partly by the diversity in their physical circumstances, and partly by the unequal degrees of civilization which they have

* Vol. II. p. 45.

† Liv. ii. Chap. viii. Charron's argument is evidently pointed at certain passages in Montaigne's Essays, in which that ingenious writer has fallen into a train of thought very similar to that which is the groundwork of Locke's reasonings against *innate practical principles*.

attained. 2. For the diversity of their speculative opinions, arising from their unequal measures of knowledge or of capacity; and, 3. For the different moral import of the same action under different systems of external behaviour.

I. (1.) In a part of the globe, where the soil and climate are so favorable as to yield all the necessaries, and many of the luxuries of life, with little or no labor on the part of man, it may reasonably be expected that the ideas of men will be more loose concerning *the rights of property* than where nature has been less liberal in her gifts. As the right of property is founded, *in the first instance*, on the natural sentiment, that *the laborer is entitled to the fruits of his own labor*, it is not surprising, that, where little or no labor is required for the gratification of our desires, theft should be regarded as a very venial offence. There is here no contradiction in the moral judgments of mankind. Men feel *there*, with respect to those articles which we appropriate with the most anxious care, as we, in this part of the world, feel with respect to *air*, *light* and *water*. If a country could be found in which no injustice was apprehended in depriving an individual of an enjoyment which he had provided for himself by a long course of persevering industry, the fact would be something to the purpose. But *this*, we may venture to say, has not yet been found to be the case in any quarter of the globe. That the circumstance I mention is the true explanation of the prevalence of theft in the South Sea Islands, and of the venial light in which it is there regarded, appears plainly from the accounts of our most intelligent navigators.

"There was another circumstance," says Captain Cook, speaking of the inhabitants of the Sandwich Islands, "in which the people perfectly resemble the other islanders we had visited. At first on their entering the ship they endeavoured to steal every thing they came near, or *rather to take it openly, as what we either should not resent, or not hinder.*" (January 1778.)

In another place, talking of the same people:—"These *islanders,*" says he, "merited our best commendations

in their commercial intercourse, never once attempting to cheat us either ashore, or along side the ships. Some of them, indeed, as already mentioned, *at first* betrayed a thievish disposition; or rather they thought that they had *a right* to every thing they could lay their hands on; but they soon laid aside a conduct, which we convinced them, they could not persevere in with impunity."

In another part of the voyage, (April 1778) in which he gives an account of the American Indians near King George's Sound, he contrasts their notions on the subject of theft with those of the South Sea Islanders. "The inhabitants of the South Sea Islands, rather than be idle, would steal any thing they could lay their hands on, without ever considering whether it would be of use to them or no. The novelty of the object was with them a sufficient motive for endeavouring, by any indirect means, to get possession of it; which marked, that in such cases they were rather actuated by a childish curiosity than by a dishonest disposition, *regardless of the modes of supplying real wants.* The inhabitants of Nootka, who invaded our property, have not such an apology. They were *thieves* in the strictest sense of the word; for they pilfered nothing from us but what they knew could be converted to the purposes of private utility, and had a *real value*, according to their estimation of things." He adds, that "he had abundant proof that stealing is much practised among themselves;"—but it is evident, from the manner in which he expresses himself, that *theft* was not *here* considered in the same venial or indifferent light as in those parts of the globe where the bounty of nature deprives exclusive property of almost all its value.*

In general it will be found, that the ideas of rude nations on the subject of *property* are precise and decided, in proportion to *the degree of labor* to which they have been habituated in procuring the means of subsistence. Of one barbarous people, (the Greenlanders) we are expressly told by a very authentic writer, (Crantz) that their regard to property acquired by labor is not only strict,

* See also Anderson's Remarks, February 1777, and December 1777.

but approaches to superstition. "Not one of them," says he, "will appropriate to himself a sea-dog in which he finds one or more harpoons with untorn thongs; nor even carry away drift wood, or other things thrown up by the sea, *if they are covered with a stone*, because they consider this as an indication that they have already been appropriated to some other person." *

I. (2.) Another very remarkable instance of an apparent diversity in the moral judgments of mankind occurs in the contradictory opinions entertained by different ages and nations on the moral lawfulness of exacting *interest* for the use of money. Aristotle, in the first book of his Politics, (6th chap.) speaking of the various ways of getting money, considers agriculture and the rearing of cattle as honorable and natural, because the earth itself, and all animals, are by nature fruitful; "but to make money from money, which is barren and unfruitful," he pronounces "to be the worst of all modes of accumulation, and the utmost corruption of artificial degeneracy. By commerce," he observes, "money is perverted from the purpose of exchange to that of gain. Still, however, this gain is obtained by the mutual transfer of different objects; but usury, by transferring merely the same object from one hand to another, generates money from money; and the interest thus generated is therefore called 'offspring,' as being precisely of the same nature, and of the same specific substance with that from which it proceeds." †—Similar sentiments

* The following passage of Voltaire is perhaps liable to the charge of over refinement; but it sufficiently shows that he saw clearly the general principle on which the lax opinions of some nations on the subject of theft are to be explained.

"On a beau nous dire, qu' à Lacédémone, le larcin étoit ordonné; ce n'est là qu'un abus des mots. La même chose que nous appellons *larcin*, n'étoit point commandée à Lacédémone; mais dans une ville, où tout étoit en commun, la permission qu'on donnoit de prendre habilement ce que des particuliers s'approprioient contre la loi, étoit une manière de punir l'esprit de propriété défendu chez ces peuples. *Le tien et le mien* étoit un crime, dont ce que nous appellons *larcin* étoit la punition."—(*Voltaire's Account of Newton's Discoveries.*) Some of his other remarks on Locke are very curious.

† Gillies's Translation. The argument of Aristotle is so extremely absurd and puerile, that it could never have led this most acute and profound philosopher to the conclusion it is employed to support, but may be justly numbered among the instances in which speculative men have exerted their ingenuity to defend, by sophistical *reasonings*, the established prejudices of the times in which they lived, and in which *the supposed evidence of* the inference has served, in their estimation, to compensate

with respect to *usury* (under which title was comprehended every *premium*, great or small, which was received by way of interest) occur in the Roman writers. "Concerning the arts," says Cicero, in his first book *de Officiis*, "and the means of acquiring wealth, which are to be accounted liberal, and which mean, the following are the sentiments usually entertained. In the first place, those means of gain are in the *least* credit which incur the hatred of mankind, as those of tax-gatherers and usurers." The same author (in the second book of the same work) mentions an anecdote of old Cato, who, being asked "What he thought of lending money upon interest?" Answered, "What do you think of the crime of murder?"

In the code of the Jewish legislator, the regulations concerning loans imply manifestly, that to exact a *premium* for the thing lent was an act of unkindness unsuitable to the fraternal relation in which the Israelites stood to one another. "Thou shalt not lend," it is said, "upon usury to thy brother: usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of any thing that is lent."—"Unto the stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury, that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all that thou settest thy hand to, in the land whither thou goest to possess it."

In consequence of this prohibition in the Mosaic law, the primitive Christians, conceiving that they ought to look on all men, both Jews and Gentiles, as *brethren*, inferred, (partly perhaps from the prohibition given by Moses, and partly from the general prejudices then prevalent against usury) that it was against the Christian law to take interest from any man. And, accordingly, there is no crime against which the fathers in their homi-

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for the weakness of the premises. It is, however, worthy of remark, that the argument, such as it is, was manifestly suggested by the etymology of the word τόκος (interest) from the verb τίκτω, *pario*; an etymology which seems to imply, that the principal generates the interest. The same idea, too, occurs in the scene between Antonio and Shylock, in the Merchant of Venice:

> "If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not
> As to thy friend, (for when did friendship take
> *A breed of barren metal from his friend?*)
> But lend it rather to thine enemy,
> Who, if he break, thou may'st with better face
> Exact the penalty."

lies declaim with more vehemence. The same abhorrence of usury of every kind appears in the canon law, insomuch that the penalty by that law is excommunication; nor is the usurer allowed burial until he has made restitution of what he got by usury, or security is given that restitution shall be made after his death. About the middle of the seventeenth century, we find the divines of the church of England very often preaching against all interest for the use of money, even that which the law allowed, as a gross immorality. And not much earlier it was the general opinion both of divines and lawyers, that, although law permitted a certain rate of interest to prevent greater evils, and in compliance with the general corruption of men, (as the law of Moses permitted polygamy, and authorized divorce for slight causes among the Jews) yet that the rules of morality did not sanction the taking *any interest* for money, at least that it was a very doubtful point whether they did. The same opinion was maintained in the English House of Commons by some of the members who were lawyers, in the debate upon a bill brought in not much more than a hundred years ago.

I need not remark how completely the sentiments of mankind are now changed upon the subject; insomuch that a moralist or divine would expose himself to ridicule if he should seriously think it worth his while to use arguments to prove the lawfulness of a practice which was formerly held in universal abhorrence. The consistency of this practice (in cases where the debtor is able to pay the interest) with the strictest morality, appears to us so manifest and indisputable, that it would be thought equally absurd to argue for it as against it.*

* A learned gentleman, indeed, of the Middle Temple, Mr. Plowden, (a lawyer, I believe, of the Roman Catholic persuasion) who published, about thirty years ago, a Treatise upon the *Law of Usury and Annuities*, has employed no less than fifty-nine pages of his work in considering the law of usury in a *spiritual view*, in order to establish the following conclusion. "That it is not sinful, but lawful for a British subject to receive legal interest for the money he may lend, whether he receive it in annual dividends from the public, or in interest from private individuals who may have borrowed it upon mortgage, bond, or otherwise." Mr. Necker, too, in the notes annexed to his *Eloge on Colbert*, thought it necessary for him to offer an apology to the Church of Rome for the freedom with which he ventured to write upon this critical subject. "Ce que je dis de intérêt est sous un point de vue politique, et n'a point de rapport avec les respectables maximes de la religion sur ce point."

The diversity of judgments, however, on this particular question, instead of proving a diversity in the *moral* judgments of mankind, affords an illustration of the uniformity of their opinions concerning the fundamental rules of moral duty.

In a state where there is little or no commerce, the great motive for borrowing being necessity, the value of a loan cannot be ascertained by calculation as it *may* be where money is borrowed for the purposes of trade. In such circumstances, therefore, every money lender who accepts of interest will be regarded in the same odious light in which pawn brokers are considered among *us*; and "the man who putteth out his coin to usury" will naturally be classed (as he is in the words of Scripture) "with him who taketh a reward against the guiltless."

These considerations, while they account for the origin of the opinions concerning the practice of taking interest for money among those nations of antiquity whose commercial transactions were few and insignificant, will be sufficient, at the same time, to establish its reasonableness and equity in countries where money is most commonly borrowed for the purposes of commercial profit, and where, of consequence, the use of it has a fixed and determined value depending (like that of any commodity in general request) on the circumstances of the market at the time. In such countries *both* parties are benefited by the transaction, and even the state is a gainer in the end. The *lenders* of money are frequently widows and orphans who subsist on the interest of their slender funds, while the *borrowers* as frequently belong to the most opulent class of the community, who wish to enlarge their capital and extend their trade; and who, by doing so, are enabled to give further encouragement to industry, and to supply labor and bread to the indigent.

The prejudices, therefore, against usury among the ancient philosophers were the natural result of the state of society which fell under their observation. The prohibition of usury among the Jews in their own mutual transactions, while they were permitted to take a *premi-*

um for the money which they lent to strangers, was in perfect consistency with the other principles of their political code; commerce being interdicted as tending to an intercourse with idolaters, and mortgages prevented by the indefeasible right which every man had to his lands.

I. (3.) I shall only mention one instance more to illustrate the effects of different states of society in modifying the moral judgments of mankind. It relates to the crime of assassination, which we now justly consider as the most dreadful of any; but which must necessarily have been viewed in a very different light when laws and magistrates were unknown, and when the only check on injustice was *the principle of resentment.* As it is the nature of this principle not only to seek the punishment of the delinquent, but to prompt the injured person to inflict the punishment with his own hand, so in every country the criminal jurisdiction of the magistrate has been the last branch of his authority that was established. Where the police, therefore, is weak, murders must not only be more frequent, but are really less criminal, than in a society like ours, where the private rights of individuals are completely protected by law, and where there hardly occurs an instance, excepting in a case of self-defence, in which one man can be justified for shedding the blood of another. And, even when in a rude age a murder is committed from unjustifiable motives of self-interest or jealousy, yet the frequency of the occurrence prevents the minds of men from revolting so strongly at the sight of blood as we do at present. It is on this very principle that Mr. Mitford accounts for the manners and ideas that prevailed in the heroic ages of Greece.

But it is unnecessary, on this head, to appeal to the history of early times, or of distant nations. In our own country of Scotland, about two centuries ago, what shocking murders were perpetrated, and seemingly without remorse, by men who were by no means wholly destitute of a sense of religion and morality! Dr. Robertson remarks, that, "Buchanan relates the murder of

Cardinal Beatoun and of Rizzio without expressing those feelings which are natural to a man, or that indignation which became an historian. Knox, whose mind was fiercer and more unpolished, talks of the death of Beatoun and of the Duke of Guise, not only without censure, but with the utmost exultation. On the other hand, the Bishop of Ross mentions the assassination of the Earl of Murray with some degree of applause. Blackwood dwells on it with the most indecent triumph; and ascribes it directly to the hand of God. Lord Ruthven, the principal actor in the conspiracy against Rizzio, wrote an account of it some time before his own death; and in all his long narrative there is not one expression of regret, or one symptom of compunction, for a crime no less dishonorable than barbarous. Morton, equally guilty of the same crime, entertained the same sentiments concerning it; and in his last moments, neither he himself, nor the ministers who attended him, seem to consider it as an action which called for repentance. Even then he talks of *David's Slaughter* as coolly as if it had been an innocent or commendable deed."*

The reflections of Dr. Robertson on these assassinations, which were formerly so common in this country, are candid and judicious. "In consequence of the limited power of our princes the administration of justice was extremely feeble and dilatory. An attempt to punish the crimes of a chieftain, or even of his vassals, often excited rebellions and civil wars. To nobles haughty and independent, among whom the causes of discord were many and unavoidable, who were quick in discerning an injury and impatient to revenge it; who esteemed it infamous to submit to an enemy, and cow-

* The following lines, in which Sir David Lindsay reprobates the murder of his contemporary and enemy, Cardinal Beatoun, deserve to be added to the instances quoted by Dr. Robertson, as an illustration of the moral sentiments of our ancestors. They are expressed with a *naïveté* which places in a strong light both the moral and religious principles of that age.

"As for this Cardinal, I grant,
He was a man we well might want;
God will forgive it soon:
But of a sooth, the truth to say,
Altho' the loun be well away,
The fact was foully done."

ardly to forgive him; who considered the right of punishing those who had injured them as a privilege of their order, and a mark of independency; such slow proceedings were extremely unsatisfactory. The blood of their adversary was, in their opinion, the only thing that could wash away an affront. Where that was not shed, their revenge was disappointed; their courage became suspected, and a stain was left on their honor. That vengeance which the impotent hand of the magistrate could not inflict their own could easily execute. Under a government so feeble, men assumed, as in a state of nature, the right of judging and redressing their own wrongs. And thus *assassination*, a crime of all others the most destructive to society, came not only to be allowed, but to be deemed honorable." In another passage he observes, "That mankind became thus habituated to blood, not only in times of war, but of peace; and from this, as well as other causes, contracted an amazing ferocity of temper and of manners."

II. The second cause I mentioned of the apparent diversity among mankind in their moral judgments is the diversity in their speculative opinions.

The manner in which this cause operates will appear obvious if it be considered, that nature, by the suggestions of our moral principles, only recommends to us particular *ends*, but leaves it to our reason to ascertain the most effectual *means* by which these *ends* are to be attained. Thus nature points out to us our own happiness, and also the happiness of our fellow creatures, as objects towards the attainment of which our best exertions ought to be directed; but she has left us to exercise our reason, both in ascertaining what the constituents of happiness are, and how they may be most completely secured. Hence, according to the different points of view in which these subjects of consideration may appear to different understandings, there must of necessity be a diversity of judgments with respect to the morality of the same actions. One man, for example, believes, that the happiness of society is most effectually consulted by an implicit obedience *in all cases*

to the will of the civil magistrate. Another, that the mischief to be apprehended from resistance and insurrection in cases of urgent necessity are trifling when compared with those which may result to ourselves and our posterity from an established despotism. The former will of course be an advocate for the duty of passive obedience; the latter for the *right*, and in certain supposable cases for the *obligation* of resistance. Both of these men, however, agree in the general principle, that it is our duty to promote to the utmost of our power the happiness of society; and they differ from each other only on a speculative question of expediency.

In like manner there is a wide diversity between the moral systems of ancient and modern times on the subject of suicide. Both, however, agree in this, that it is the duty of man to obey the will of his Creator, and to consult every intimation of it that his reason can discover, as the supreme law of his conduct. They differed only in their *speculative opinions* concerning the interpretation of the will of God, as manifested by he dispensations of his providence in the events of human life. The prejudices of the ancients on this subject were indeed founded in a very partial and erroneous view of circumstances (arising, however, not unnaturally from the unsettled state of society in the ancient republics;) but they only afford an additional instance of the numerous mistakes to which human *reason* is liable; not of a fluctuation in the judgments of mankind concerning the fundamental rules of moral duty.

III. The different moral import too of the same material action, under different systems of external behaviour, deserves particular attention, in forming an estimate of the moral sentiments of different ages and nations.

This difference is chiefly owing to two causes: First, to the different conceptions of happiness and misery,—of what is to be desired and shunned,—which men are led to form in different states of society. Secondly, to the effect of accident, which, as it leads men to speak different languages in different countries, so it leads

them to express the same dispositions of the heart by different external observances.

III. (1.) Where the opinions of mankind vary concerning the external circumstances that constitute happiness, the external expressions of benevolence must vary of course. Thus, in the fact referred to by Locke concerning the Indians in the neighbourhood of Hudson's Bay, the wishes of the aged parent being different from what we are accustomed to observe in this part of the world, the marks of filial affection on the part of the child must vary also. "In some countries honor is associated with suffering, and it is reckoned a favor to be killed with circumstances of torture. Instances of this occur in the manners of some American nations, and in the pride which an Indian matron feels when placed on the funeral pile of her deceased husband." * In such cases an action may have to us all the external marks of extreme cruelty, while it proceeded from a disposition generous and affectionate.

III. (2.) A difference in the moral import of the same action often arises from the same accidental causes which lead men, in different parts of the globe, to express the same ideas by different arbitrary signs.

What happens in the trifling forms and ceremonies of behaviour may serve to illustrate the operation of the same causes on more important occasions. "In the general principles of urbanity, politeness, or civility, we may venture to assert, that the opinions of all nations are agreed; but in the expression of this disposition we meet with endless varieties. In Europe, it is the form of respect to uncover the *head;* in Japan the corresponding form is said to be to uncover *the foot* by dropping the slipper.† Persons unacquainted with any language but their own are apt to think the words they use natural and fixed expressions of things; while the

* Dr. Ferguson, Principles of Moral and Political Science, Vol. II. p. 141.

† "Even here," Sir Joshua Reynolds ingeniously remarks, "we may perhaps observe a general idea running through all the varieties; to wit, the general idea of making the body less in token of respect, whether by bowing the body, kneeling, *prostration,* pulling off the upper part of the dress, or throwing aside the lower."

words of a different language they consider as mere jargon, or the result of caprice. In the same manner, forms of behaviour different from their own appear offensive and irrational, or a perverse substitution of absurd for reasonable manners.

"Among the varieties of this sort, we find actions, gestures, and forms of expression in their own nature indifferent, entered into the code of civil or religious duties, and enforced under the strongest sanctions of public censure or esteem; or under the strongest denunciations of the divine indignation or favor.

"Numberless ceremonies and observances in the ritual of different sects are to be accounted for on the same principles which produce the diversity of names or signs for the same thing in the vocabulary of different languages. Thus, the generality of Christians when they pray take off their hats; the Jews when they pray put them on. Such acts, how strongly soever they may affect the imaginations of the multitude, may justly be considered as part of the arbitrary language of particular countries; implying no diversity whatever in the ideas or feelings of those among whom they are established."*

As a further proof of the impossibility of judging of the general character of a people from their opinions concerning the morality of *particular* actions, we may observe, that, in some of the writings of the ancient moralists, we meet with the most refined and sublime precepts blended promiscuously with dissuasives from the most shocking and detestable crimes; in one sentence, perhaps, a precept which may be read with advantage by the most enlightened of the present times; and in the next, a dissuasive from some crime which no one now could be supposed to perpetrate, who was not arrived at the last stage of depravity. The following quotations from the *ΠΟΙΗΜΑ ΝΟΥΘΕΤΙΚΟΝ*, ascribed to Phocylides,† will sufficiently illustrate this

* See Dr. Ferguson's Principles of Moral and Political Science, Vol. II. pp. 142. 143.

† Phocylides, a Greek Poet and Philosopher, flourished about 540 years before the Christian era. The poem, however, which passes under his name, is supposed to have been the work of some writer contemporary with Adrian or Trajan. But this does not render the above quotations the less applicable to our present purpose.

remark. I shall transcribe them in a very literal Latin version, and would have endeavoured to bring them within the reach of a still wider circle of my readers by means of an English translation, if the simplicity of expression in the two learned languages had admitted of a literal version into our own tongue.

"Primum Deum cole, postea vero tuos parentes.
Omnibus justa tribue, neque judicium ad gratiam trahe.
Ne abjicias paupertatem, injuste ne judica personam:
Quod si tu male judicaveris, Deus te postea judicabit.
Mendico statim da, neque cras venire jube.
Exulem in domum excipe, et cœcum duc in viam.
Naufragorum miserere, quoniam navigatio incerta est.
Communis casus omnium; vita trochus; instabilis felicitas.
Sint in pari honore advenæ cum civibus;
Omnes enim paupertatem experimur vagam,
Regioque nullum stabile habet solum hominibus.
Qui volens injuste agit, malus vir est; sed qui ex necessitate,
Non dico prorsus malum; sed institutum examina cujusque.
Infantulis tenellis ne violenter manum corripueris;
Neque mulier conceptum fœtum corrumpat in ventre,
Neque post partum canibus projiciat aut vulturibus lacerandum.
Neque ullus suæ conjugi gravidæ manum afferat."

After this follow some dissuasives from crimes too shocking to be named; and immediately after the following beautiful maxims.

"Tuum ama conjugem. Quid enim suavius et præstantius
Quam si viro consentit chara uxor usque ad senectam,
Et maritus suæ uxori, neque inter eos incidit contentio.
Reverere canos circum tempora, cedeque senibus
Sede et honoribus omnibus; natu vero præstantem
Senem, æqualem patris, paribus cum patre, honoribus venerare.
Servum ne lædas maledictis deferendo apud herum."
Accipe vel a servo, si recte sapiat, consilium.

I have dwelt very long on this subject, because, if it be painful to be staggered in our belief of the immutability of moral distinctions by the first aspect of the History of Mankind, it affords a tenfold pleasure to those who feel themselves interested in the cause of morality, when they find, on an accurate examination, that those facts on which sceptics have laid the greatest stress are not only consistent with the moral constitution of man, but result necessarily from this constitution, diversified in its effects according to the different cir-

cumstances in which the individual is situated. To trace in this manner the essential principles of the human frame amidst the various disguises it borrows from accidental causes, is one of the most interesting employments of philosophical curiosity; nor is there perhaps a more satisfactory gratification to a liberal mind than when it recognises, under the superstition, the ignorance, and the loathsome sensualities of savage life, the kindred features of humanity, and the indelible vestiges of that divine image after which man was originally formed.

One of the most pleasing facts of this kind that I have met with is mentioned by Sparman, in his Travels through the Southern Parts of Africa, where he had occasion to visit a tribe of men, whom we are accustomed to consider as sunk, by the grossness and brutishness of their manners, to the lowest point in the scale of civilization; and with this fact, (which I shall state in Sparman's own words, without any comment), I shall at present dismiss this part of our argument.

"A Hottentot is rich in proportion to the number of his cattle; but the richest is clothed, fed, and attended, no better than the poor; more trinkets of brass, of shells, or of beads; more fat in dressing his victuals, or in anointing his body; the honor or advantage of being able to maintain more servants or cowherds. And that which constitutes the distinction of rank in this simple race of men is the divine pleasure of doing good to his fellow creatures."

CHAPTER FOURTH.

CONTINUATION OF THE REMARKS ON THE OBJECTIONS STATED BY DIFFERENT WRITERS TO THE REALITY AND IMMUTABILITY OF MORAL DISTINCTIONS, AND TO THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE MORAL FACULTY AMONG MANKIND.

THE doctrines on this subject which I have hitherto been endeavouring to refute, (how erroneous soever in their principles, and dangerous in their consequences) have been maintained by some writers, who certainly were not unfriendly in their views to the interests of virtue and of mankind. In proof of this, I need only mention the name of Mr. Locke, who, in the course of a long and honorable life, distinguished himself no less by the exemplary worth of his private character, and by his ardent zeal for civil and religious liberty, than by the depth and originality of his philosophical speculations. His errors, however, ought not, on these accounts, to be treated with reverence; but, on the contrary, they require a more careful and severe examination, in consequence of the high authority they derive from his genius and his virtues. And, accordingly, I have enlarged on such of his opinions as seemed to me favorable to sceptical views concerning the foundation of morals, at much greater length than the ingenuity or plausibility of his reasonings in support of them may appear to some to have merited.

To these opinions of Locke Lord Shaftesbury has alluded in various parts of his works with a good deal of indignation; and particularly in the following passage of his Advice to an Author. "One would imagine that our philosophical writers, who pretend to treat of morals, should far outdo our poets in recommending virtue, and representing what is *fair* and *amiable* in human actions. One would imagine, that, if they turned their eyes towards remote countries, (of which they affect so much to speak) they should search for that simplicity of manners, and innocence of behaviour, which has been often *known* among mere savages, ere they were corrupted

by our commerce, and, by sad example, instructed in all kinds of treachery and inhumanity. 'Twould be of advantage to us to hear the cause of this strange corruption in ourselves, and be made to consider of our deviation from nature, and from the just purity of manners which might be expected, especially from a people so assisted and enlightened by religion. For who would not naturally expect more justice, fidelity, temperance, and honesty, from Christians, than from Mahometans or mere Pagans? But so far are our modern moralists from condemning any unnatural vices or corrupt manners, whether in our own or foreign climates, that they would have *vice* itself appear as natural as *virtue;* and, from the worst examples, would represent to us, 'that all actions are *naturally* indifferent; that they have no note or character of good or ill in *themselves*, but are distinguished by mere fashion, law, or *arbitrary* decree.' Wonderful philosophy! raised from the dregs of an illiterate mean kind, which was ever despised among the great ancients, and rejected by all men of action or sound erudition; but, in these ages, imperfectly copied from the original, and, with much disadvantage, imitated and assumed in common, both by devout and indevout attempters in the moral kind."

Besides these incidental remarks on Locke, which occur in different parts of Shaftesbury's writings, there is a letter of his addressed to a student at the university, which relates almost entirely to the opinion we have been considering, and contains some excellent observations on the subject.

In this letter Lord Shaftesbury observes, that "all those called *free writers* now-a-days have espoused those principles which Mr. Hobbes set a-foot in this last age."—"Mr. Locke," he continues, "as much as I honor him on account of other writings, (on government, policy, trade, coin, education, toleration, &c.) and as well as I knew him, and can answer for his sincerity as a most zealous Christian and believer, did however go in the self same track, and is followed by the Tindals, and all the other ingenious free authors of our time.

"'Twas Mr. Locke that struck the home blow; for

Mr. Hobbes's character and base slavish principles of government took off the poison of his philosophy. 'Twas Mr. Locke that struck at all fundamentals, threw all order and virtue out of the world, and made the very ideas of these (which are the same with those of GOD) unnatural, and without foundation in our minds. *Innate* is a word he poorly plays upon; the right word, though less used, is *connatural*. For what has birth, or progress of the *fœtus* out of the womb, to do in this case? The question is not about the time the ideas entered, or the moment that one body came out of the other, but whether the constitution of man be such, that being adult and grown up, at such or such a time, sooner or later, (no matter when) the idea and sense of order, administration, and a God, will not infallibly, inevitably, necessarily spring up in him?"

In this last remark, Lord Shaftesbury appears to me to place the question concerning *innate ideas* upon the right and only philosophical footing, and to afford a key to all the confusion which runs through Locke's argument on the subject. The observations which follow are not less just and valuable; but I must not indulge myself in any further extracts at present.*

These passages of Shaftesbury, in some of which the warmth of his temper has betrayed him into expressions disrespectful to Locke, have drawn on him a number of very severe animadversions, particularly from Warburton, in the preface to his *Divine Legation of Moses*. But although Shaftesbury's personal allusions to Locke cannot be justified, some allowance ought to be made for the indignation of a generous mind at a doctrine which

* Notwithstanding, however, the countenance which Locke's reasonings against *innate practical principles* have the appearance of giving to the philosophy of Hobbes, I have not a doubt that the difference of opinion between him and Lord Shaftesbury on this point was almost entirely verbal. Of this I have elsewhere produced ample proofs; but the following passage will suffice for my present purpose. "I would not be mistaken, as if, because I deny an innate law, I thought there were none but positive laws. There is a great deal of difference between an *innate law* and a *law of nature*, between something imprinted on our minds in their very original and something that we, being ignorant of, may attain to the knowledge of, by the use and due application of our natural faculties. And I think they equally forsake the truth, who, running into the contrary extremes, either affirm an innate law, or deny that there is a law knowable by the light of nature, without the help of a positive revelation."—*Locke's Works*, Vol. I. p. 44. (Law's *8vo. Edit.*)

(however well meant by the proposer) strikes at the very root of morality. In this instance, too, it is not improbable that the discussion of the general argument may have added to the asperity of his style, by reviving the memory of the private controversies, which, it is presumable, had formerly been carried on between Locke and him on this important subject. It is well known that Shaftesbury was Locke's pupil, and also that their tempers and literary tastes were not suitable to each other. In this it is commonly supposed that the former was to blame; but, I presume, not *wholly*. Dr. Warton tells us, "that Mr. Locke affected to despise poetry, and that he depreciated the ancients; which circumstance," he adds, "as I am informed from undoubted authority, was the subject of perpetual discontent and dispute between him and his pupil Lord Shaftesbury." * That Shaftesbury was not insensible to Locke's real merits, appears sufficiently from a passage in his *First Letter to a Student at the University*. "However, I am not sorry that I lent you Locke's Essay, a book that may as well qualify men for business and the world as for the sciences and the university. No one has done more towards the recalling of philosophy from barbarity into use and practice of the world, and into the company of the better and politer sort, who might well be ashamed of it in its other dress. No one has opened a better and clearer way to reasoning."

The theories concerning the origin of our moral ideas which we are now to consider, although they agree in many respects with that of Locke and his followers, have yet proceeded from very different views and intentions. They also involve some principles that are peculiar to themselves, and which, therefore, render a separate examination of them necessary for the complete illustration of this fundamental article of ethics. They have been distinguished by Mr. Smith by the name of *the licentious systems of morals*,—a name which

* Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope.

certainly cannot be censured as too harsh, when applied to those which maintain that the motives of all men are fundamentally the same, and that what we commonly call virtue is mere hypocrisy.

Among the licentious moralists of modern times, the most celebrated are, the Duke of la Rochefoucald, author of the Maxims and Moral Reflections, and Dr. Mandeville, author of the Fable of the Bees. By the generality of our English philosophers, these two writers are commonly coupled together as advocates for the same system, although their views and their characters were certainly extremely different. In the first editions of Mr. Smith's Theory, he speaks of a licentious doctrine concerning morality, which, he says, "was first sketched by the delicate pencil of the Duke of la Rochefoucauld, and was afterwards enforced by the coarse but powerful eloquence of Dr. Mandeville." In the last edition of that work the name of La Rochefoucauld is omitted, from Mr. Smith's deliberate conviction that it was unjust to his memory to class him with an author whose writings tend directly to confound all our ideas of moral distinctions. On this point I speak from personal knowledge, having been requested by Mr. Smith, when I happened to be at Paris some years before his death, to express to the late excellent and unfortunate Duke of la Rochefoucald his sincere regret for having introduced the name of his ancestor and that of Dr. Mandeville in the same sentence.

The Duke of la Rochefoucauld, author of the Maxims, was born in 1613, and died in 1680. The early part of his education was neglected; but the disadvantages he labored under in consequence of this circumstance, he in a great measure overcame by the force of his own talents. According to Madame de Maintenon, who knew him well, "he was possessed of a countenance prepossessing and interesting; of manners graceful and dignified; of much genius, and little acquired knowledge." The same excellent judge adds of him, that "he was intriguing, accommodating, and cautious; but that she had never known a friend more firm, more *open,* or whose counsels were of greater value. He

loved raillery; and used to say, that personal bravery appeared to him nothing better than folly; and yet he himself was brave to an extreme. He preserved to the last the vivacity of his mind, which was always agreeable, though naturally serious."

In the share which he took in the political transactions of his times, he discovered a facility to engage in intrigues, without much steadiness in the pursuit of his object. This, at least, is a remark made on him by the Cardinal de Retz, who, in a portrait of him drawn with a masterly, though somewhat prejudiced hand, ascribes the apparent inconsistencies of his conduct to a natural want of resolution. A later writer,* more favourable to his memory, has attempted to account for them with much plausibility, by that superiority of penetration, and that rigid integrity, which all his contemporaries allow to have been distinguishing features in his character; and which, though not sufficient to keep him wholly disengaged from intrigues in a court where every thing was put in motion by the spirit of party, rendered him soon disgusted with the pretended patriotism and the selfish politics of those with whom he acted. Accordingly, although he was induced by the force of early connexions, and a natural facility of temper, to involve himself during a part of his life in public affairs, and more particularly, to become a tool of the Duchess of Longueville in the cabals of the *Fronde*, his own taste seems to have attached him to a more private scene, where he could enjoy in freedom the society and friendship of a few chosen companions. Towards the end of his life he spent much of his time at the house of Madame de la Fayette, which appears, from the letters of her friend Madame de Sévigné, to have been, at that period, the resort of all persons distinguished for wit and refinement. It was in the midst of this chosen society that he composed his Memoirs of the Regency of Ann of Austria, and also his Moral Reflections and Maxims.

Of these two works the former is written with much

* M. Suard.

elegance, and with a great appearance of sincerity; but the events which it records are uninteresting in the present age. Bayle, in his Dictionary, gives it the preference to the Commentaries of Cæsar; but the judgment of the public has not been equally favorable. "The Memoirs of the Duc de la Rochefoucauld," says Voltaire in his account of the writers of the age of Louis the Fourteenth, "are *read;* but every one knows his maxims by heart." In fact, it is almost entirely by these *maxims* (which, as Montesquieu observes, *have become the proverbs of men of wit)* that the name of La Rochefoucauld is known; and it must be confessed that few performances have acquired to their authors a higher or more general reputation. "One of the works," says Voltaire, "which contributed most to form the taste of the nation to a justness and precision of thought and expression, was the small collection of maxims by Francis Duke of la Rochefoucauld. Although there is but one idea in the book, that self-love is the spring of all our actions, yet this idea is presented in so great a variety of forms as to be always amusing. When it first appeared, it was read with avidity; and it contributed, more than any other performance since the revival of letters, to accustom writers to indulge themselves in an originality of thought, and to improve the vivacity, precision, and delicacy of French composition."

That the tendency of these maxims is, upon the whole, unfavorable to morality; and that they always leave a disagreeable impression on the mind, must, I think, be granted.* At the same time, it may be fairly

* Mr. Spence, in his *Anecdotes*, ascribes to Mr. Pope a remark on La Rochefoucauld, which does no small honor to the poet's shrewdness and knowledge of human nature. I quote it in Spence's words. "As L'Esprit,* La Rochefoucauld, and that sort of people, prove that all virtues are disguised vices, I would engage to prove all vices to be disguised virtues. Neither indeed is true; but this would be a more agreeable subject, and would overturn their whole scheme."—See *Spence's Anecdotes of Men and Books*, Malone's Edition.

The above remark of Pope coincides in substance with a criticism of La Harpe on La Rochefoucauld's maxims.

"Non seulement cet ouvrage attriste et flétrit l'âme, mais il a un grand défaut en morale: C'est de ne montrer le cœur humain que sous un jour défavourable. Il y

* Pope here had probably in view *Jacques Esprit*, author of a book entitled *Fausseté des Vertus Humaines* (2 Vols. Paris, 1678) which is said to be nothing more than a dull commentary on *La Rochefoucauld's Maxims. Biog. Universelle*, Article *Esprit.*

questioned if the motives of the author have in general been well understood, either by his admirers or by his opponents. In affirming that self-love is the spring of all our actions, there is no good reason for supposing that he meant to deny the reality of moral distinctions as a philosophical truth,—a supposition quite inconsistent with his own fine and deep remark, that *hypocrisy is itself a homage which vice renders to virtue.* He states it merely as a proposition, which in the course of his experience as a man of the world, he had found very generally verified in the higher classes of society, and which he was induced to announce, without any qualification or restriction, in order to give more force and poignancy to his satire. In adopting this mode of writing he has unconsciously conformed himself, like many other French authors, who have since followed his example,* to a suggestion which Aristotle has stated with admirable depth and acuteness in his Rhetoric. "Sentences or apothegms lend much aid to eloquence. One reason of this is, that they flatter the *pride* of the hearers, who are delighted, when the speaker, making use of general language, touches upon opinions which they had before known to be true in part. Thus, a person who had the misfortune to live in a bad neighbourhood, or to have worthless children, would easily assent to the

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auroit peut-être tout autant de sagacité, et surement beaucoup plus de justice à démêler aussi ce qu'il y a dans l'homme de noble et de vertueux. Croit on que la vertu ne garde pas souvent son secret tout aussi bien que l'amour propre, et qu'il n'y ait pas autant de mérite à l'appercevoir?"—*Lycée*, Tome X. p. 299.

* Thus it has often been said by French writers, that *no* man is a hero to his *valet de chambre*; and the maxim, when properly understood, has some foundation in truth. It probably was meant by its original author to refer only to those petty circumstances of temper and behaviour which, without effecting the essentials of character, have a tendency to diminish, on a near approach, the theatrical effect of great men. It has, however, been frequently quoted as implying that there are none whose virtues will bear a close examination; in which acceptation, it is not more injurious to human nature than it is contrary to fact. How much more profound, as well as more pleasing, is the remark of Plutarch! "Real virtue is most loved where it is most nearly seen, and no respect which it commands from strangers can equal the never-ceasing admiration it excites in the daily intercourse of domestic life."—*(Plut. Vit. Periclis.)* It is indeed true, that some men, who are admired by the world, appear to most advantage when viewed at a distance; but on the other hand, may it not be contended, that many who are objects of general odium would be found, if examined more nearly, not to be destitute of estimable and amiable qualities? May we not even go further, and assert that the very worst of men have a mixture of good in their composition, and to express a doubt whether human nature would gain or lose upon a thorough acquaintance with the conduct and motives of individuals?

speaker who should affirm that *nothing* is more vexatious than to have any neighbours; *nothing* more irrational than to bring children into the world." This observation of Aristotle, while it goes far to account for the imposing and dazzling effect of these rhetorical exaggerations, ought to guard us against the common and popular error of mistaking them for the serious and profound generalizations of science. As for La Rochefoucauld, we know, from the best authorities, that in private life he was a conspicuous example of all those moral qualities of which he seemed to deny the existence; * and that he exhibited, in this respect, a striking contrast to the Cardinal de Retz, who has presumed to censure him for his want of faith in the reality of virtue.†

In reading La Rochefoucauld, it should never be forgotten that it was within the vortex of a court he enjoyed his chief opportunities of studying the world, and that the narrow and exclusive circle in which he moved was not likely to afford him the most favourable specimens of human nature in general. Of the court of Louis the Fourteenth, in particular, we are told by a very nice and reflecting observer (Madame de la Fayette) that "ambition and gallantry were the *soul*, actuating alike both men and women. So many contending interests, so many different cabals were constantly at work, and in all of those women bore so important a part, that love was always mingled with business, and business with love. Nobody was tranquil or indifferent. Every one studied to advance himself by pleasing, serving, or ruining others. Idleness and languor were unknown, and nothing was thought of but intrigues or pleasures."

In the passage already quoted from Voltaire, he takes notice of the effect of La Rochefoucauld's max-

* In several of his maxims, for instance, he is at pains to depreciate the virtue of courage, and speaks of it in a way that might lead a careless reader to suspect that he felt in himself a deficiency of this quality. Yet we learn from his personal enemy, the Cardinal de Retz, that he was extremely brave, "Il n'a jamais été guerrier, quoiqu'il fut très soldat."—*Mémoires*, Tome I. p. 312.

"Il aimoit à railler," says Madame de Maintenon, "il disoit *que la bravoure personelle lui paroissoit une folie;* et il étoit pourtant très brave."—*Letters of Madame de Maintenon.*

† "Ses maximes ne marquent pas assez de foi à la vertu."—*Mémoires*, Tome I. *p. 188.*

ims in improving the style of French composition. We may add to this remark, that their effect has not been less sensible in vitiating the tone and character of French philosophy, by bringing into vogue those false and degrading representations of human nature and of human life, which have prevailed in that country more or less for a century past. Mr. Addison, in one of the papers of the *Tatler*, expresses his indignation at this general bias among the French writers of his age. "It is impossible," he observes, "to read a passage in Plato, or Tully, or a thousand other ancient moralists, without being a greater and better man for it. On the contrary, I could never read any of our modish French authors, or those of our own country, who are the imitators and admirers of that nation, without being for some time out of humor with myself, and at every thing about me. Their business is to depreciate human nature, and to consider it under the worst appearences; they give mean interpretations and base motives to the worthiest of actions. In short, they endeavour to make no distinction between man and man, or between the species of man and that of the brutes." *

From this time downwards we may trace the rise and progress of that disposition to *persiflage*, which has been so long characteristical of the higher orders in France, and which, a few years ago, some individuals in our own country were so ambitious to copy. In France it seems to have attained to its greatest glory during the gay and unprincipled period of the regency; and ever since it has left sensible effects, not only on the tone of fashionable society, but on the spirit of most philosophical theories. Its principles are too fugitive to be reduced to any system; but fortunately a faithful and lively portrait of it is preserved for the information of posterity in one of the comedies of *Gresset*. The following speech of Cleon in the *Méchant* is an invaluable document for the history of French manners, (now alas! too widely diffused all over the civilized world) during the greater part of the eighteenth century.

* Some of the foregoing remarks on La Rouchefoucauld are copied from the Preliminary Dissertation to the Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica, by the author of this work.

"Oh! bon, quelle folie! êtes vous de ces gens
Soupçonneux, ombrageux? Croyez-vous aux méchans?
Et réalisez-vous cet être imaginaire,
Ce petit préjugé, qui ne va qu'au vulgaire?
Pour moi, je n'y crois pas, (soit dit sans intérêt,)
Tout le monde est méchant, et personne ne l'est,
On reçoit et l'on rend; on est à peu près quitte.—
Parlez-vous des propos? Comme il est ni mérite,
Ni goût, ni jugement, qui ne soit contredit,
Que rien n'est vrai sur rien, qu'importe ce qu'on dit?
Tel sera mon heros, et tel sera le vôtre:
L'Aigle d'une maison n'est qu'un sot dans un autre.
Je dis ici qu'Eraste est un mauvais plaisant;
Eh bien! on dit ailleurs qu'Eraste est amusant.
Si vous parlez et des faits et des tracasseries,
Je n'y vois dans le fond que des plaisanteries;
Et si vous attachez du crime à tout cela,
Beaucoup d'honnêtes gens sont de ces fripons-là.
L'agrément couvre tout; il rend tout légitime.
Aujourd'hui dans le monde on ne connoit qu'un crime,
C'est l'ennui: pour le fuir tous les moyens sont bons.
Il gagneroit bientôt les meilleurs maisons,
Si l'on s'aimoit si fort: l'amusement circule
Par les préventions, les torts, le ridicule.
Au reste chacun parle et fait comme il l'entend;
Tout est mal, tout est bien: tout le monde est content." *

From the form in which La Rochefoucauld's maxims are published, it is impossible to attempt a particular

* In subjoining a prose translation of these exquisite verses, I need scarcely say that I aim at nothing but to convey to the merely English reader a general conception of the drift and substance of the original.

"Good heavens! What extravagance! Is it possible that you should belong to that suspicious and jealous tribe who believe in the existence of *the wicked*? And that your fancy should realize to itself that phantom which is conjured up by the low prejudices of the vulgar? For my own part, to speak impartially, *my* faith does not go quite so far. I consider every body as bad, and nobody as bad. We all take and give, so as to balance our accounts pretty equally with each other. Do you speak of what passes in conversation? As there is neither merit, nor taste, nor opinion, which does not furnish matter of dispute,—as there is nothing which can be pronounced true of any thing,—of what consequence is it what one says? One man shall be *my* hero, and another shall be yours; the idol of this house is the laughing stock of the next. Here for instance, I say of *Eraste*, that his attempts at wit are dull and pitiful; elsewhere you will find people that will tell you that they think *Eraste* an amusing companion. If you talk of the *actions* of men, and are hurt with their intrigues and duplicity, in *these*, when examined to the bottom, I see nothing but a fund of entertainment to myself. And were you to attach to things of this sort the idea of *crime*, how many respectable men would you be forced to number with the knaves? To be *agreeable* covers every fault, or serves as its apology. The only crime now known is *ennui*, and every thing is good which helps us to escape from it. Were people to feel any serious attachment to their friends, this evil would soon make its way into the best company; for the circulation of amusement depends on prejudices, on calumnies, and on absurdities. In short every body now speaks and acts according to his own humor. All is wrong, all is right, and all the world *is equally* happy."

examination of them; nor, indeed, do I apprehend that such an examination is necessary for any of the purposes which I have at present in view. So far as their tendency is unfavorable to the reality of moral distinctions, it is the same with that of Mandeville's system; and, therefore, the strictures I am now to offer on the latter writer may be applied with equal truth to the general conclusions which some have chosen to draw from the satirical observations of the former.

Dr. Mandeville was born in Holland, where he received his education both in medicine and in philosophy. He made his first appearance in England about the beginning of the last century, and soon attracted very general attention by the vivacity and licentiousness of his publications.

One of his first performances was levelled at his own profession. It is entitled, "A Treatise on the Hypochondriac and Histeric Passions, interspersed with Discourses in the way of Dialogue on the Art of Physic, and Remarks on the modern practice of Physicians and Apothecaries." The work, however, by which he is best known, is a poem printed in 1714, with the title of "The Grumbling Hive, or Knaves turned Honest;" upon which he afterwards wrote remarks, and published the whole at London in 1723. This book was presented by the grand jury of Middlesex the same year, and was severely animadverted on soon after by some very eminent writers, particularly by Dr. Berkeley, bishop of Cloyne, and by Dr. Hutcheson of Glasgow, in his various treatises on ethical subjects.

To the remarks on the Fable of the Bees, the author has prefixed an inquiry into the origin of moral virtue; and it is to this inquiry that I propose to confine myself chiefly in the following strictures, as it exhibits his peculiar opinions concerning the principles of morals in a more systematical form than any of his other writings. In the course of the observations which I have to offer with respect to it, I shall perhaps be led to report one or two remarks which were already suggested by the doctrines of Locke. But for this repetition I hope that the importance of the subject will be a sufficient apology.

The great object of Mandeville's inquiry into the origin of moral virtue is to show that all our moral sentiments are derived from education, and are the workmanship of politicians and lawgivers. "These," says he, "observing how selfish an animal man is, and how impossible, in consequence, it would be to retain numbers together in the same society without government, endeavoured to give his selfish principles a direction useful to the public. For this purpose they have labored in all ages to convince him that it is better to restrain than to indulge his appetites, and to consult the public interest than his own. The engine they employed in working upon him was flattery, which they addressed to vanity, one of the strongest principles of our nature. They contrasted *man* with the *lower animals*, and magnified the advantages he possesses over them. The human race they divided into two classes; the mean and contemptible, who, after the example of the brutes, gratify every animal propensity; and the generous and high spirited, who, disdaining these low gratifications, bent their study to cultivate the nobler principles of our nature, and waged a continual war with themselves to promote the happiness of others. In the case of men possessed of an extraordinary degree of pride and resolution, these representations of politicians and moralists were able to effectuate a complete conquest of their natural appetites, and a complete contempt of their own *visible* interests; and even the feeble minded and abject would be unwilling to rank themselves in the class to which they really belonged, and would strive to conceal their imperfections from the world, by their forwardness to swell the cry in praise of self-denial and of public spirit. Such," says Mandeville, "*was*, or at least *might have been*, the manner after which savage man was broke; and what we call the moral virtues are merely the political offspring which flattery begot upon pride."

I shall not insist on the absurdity of supposing that *government* is an invention of political wisdom, and not the natural result of man's constitution, and of the circumstances in which he is placed. This, however im-

probable, is one of the least absurdities of Mandeville's system. Its capital defect consists in supposing that the origin of our moral virtues may be accounted for from the power of *education;* a fundamental error, which is common to the system of Mandeville and that of Locke as commonly understood by his followers, and which I had formerly occasion to refute at great length. I shall not therefore enlarge upon it at present, but shall confine myself to those parts of Mandeville's philosophy which are peculiar to himself.

. It appears from the passage formerly quoted, that the engine which Mandeville supposes politicians to employ for the purpose of creating the artificial distinction between virtue and vice is *vanity* or *pride*, which two words he uses as synonymous. He employs them likewise in a much more extensive sense than their common acceptation authorizes; to denote, not only an overweening conceit of our own character and attainments, or a weak and childish passion for the admiration of others, but that reasonable desire for the esteem of our fellow creatures, which, so far from being a weakness, is a laudable and respectable principle.

The desire of esteem and the dread of contempt, are undoubtedly among the strongest principles of our nature; but in good minds they are only subsidiary to the desire of excellence, nay, they cannot be effectually gratified if they are the first springs of our actions. To be pleased with the applause of others, it is not sufficient to possess the *appearance* of good qualities, we must possess the *reality*. A man of sense and delicacy is never more mortified than when he receives praise for qualities which he knows do not belong to him; and he is comforted, under the mistaken censures of the world, by the consciousness he does not deserve them. A desire of applause may, without detracting from our merit, mingle itself with the more worthy motives of our conduct; but if it is the *sole* motive, the attainment of the object will never communicate a lasting satisfaction. "Falsus honor juvat, et mendax infamia terret, Quem, nisi mendosum et mendacem?" *

* *Hor. Ep. xvi. l. 39.*

Vanity, in propriety of speech, denotes a weakness arising from a perversion of the *desire of esteem.* A man is *vain* who values himself on what is unworthy of regard, as the external distinctions of equipage or dress. He, too, is *vain* who wishes to pass in the world for what he really *is not,* and boasts of qualities which he does not possess. We also give the name of *vanity* to that weakness which disposes a man to be pleased with flattery, and which leads him not only to desire the esteem of others, but to place his happiness in public expressions of it. In every case *vanity* denotes a weakness which is carefully to be distinguished from the love of true glory.

Mandeville uses the word to express every sentiment of regard that we feel for the good opinion of others; and, wherever this regard can be supposed to have had any influence on our conduct, he concludes that *vanity* was our principle of action.

From these observations, added to those formerly made on Locke, it follows, in the first place, That the whole of our moral sentiments cannot be accounted for from education. 2. That, by confounding together *vanity* and a reasonable regard to the *esteem* of our fellow creatures, Mandeville has expressed the fundamental proposition of his system in terms so vague and ambiguous as renders it impossible to form a distinct conception of his meaning. And, 3. That even this reasonable and laudable desire of esteem cannot be effectually gratified, if it be the sole principle of our conduct; and therefore cannot be *the only* source of our moral virtues.

From the principle of *vanity,* Mandeville endeavours to account for all the instances of self-denial that have occurred in the world. But he is not satisfied with explaining away in this manner the reality of moral distinctions. He endeavours to show that human life is nothing but a scene of hypocrisy, and that there is really little or none of that self-denial to be found that some men lay claim to. In his theory of moral virtue he seems to allow that education may not only teach a man to check his appetites in order to procure the es-

teem of others, but that it may teach him to consider such a conquest over the lower principles of his nature as noble in itself, and as elevating him still further than nature had done above the level of the brutes. "Those men," says he, "who have labored to establish societies, endeavoured, in the first place, to insinuate themselves into the hearts of men by flattery, extolling the excellencies of our nature above other animals. They next began to instruct them in the notions of honor and shame, representing the one as the worst of all evils, and the other as the highest good to which mortals could aspire;—which being done, they laid before them how unbecoming it was the dignity of such sublime creatures to be solicitous about gratifying those appetites which they had in common with the brutes, and at the same time unmindful of those higher qualities that gave them the preeminence over all visible beings. They, indeed, confessed that these impulses of nature were very pressing; that it was troublesome to resist, and very difficult wholly to subdue them. But this they only used as an argument to demonstrate how glorious the conquest of them was on the one hand, and how scandalous on the other not to attempt it."

These arguments, it is evident, are addressed to *pride* rather than to *vanity;* and it is worthy of remark, that, though Mandeville never states the distinction between these two words, but, on the contrary, affects to consider them as synonymous, he plainly was aware of the import of both, and sometimes uses the one, and sometimes the other, as best suits his purpose. Thus, in the following passage, if the word *vanity* were substituted instead of *pride*, the impropriety could not escape the most careless reader. "Such men, as from no other motive but their love of *goodness*, perform a worthy action in silence, have, I confess, acquired more refined notions of virtue than those I have hitherto spoke of, yet even in these (with whom the world has never yet swarmed) we may discover no small symptoms of *pride;* and the humblest man alive must confess that the reward of a virtuous action, which is the satisfaction that ensues upon it, consists in a certain pleasure he procures to

himself, by contemplating on his own worth; which pleasure, together with the occasion of it, are as certain signs of *pride* as looking pale and trembling at any imminent danger are the symptoms of fear."

From these passages, however, it is abundantly clear that, in his *Theory of Virtue*, Mandeville admits the possibility of self-denial being exercised merely for the private gratification of the pride of the individual, without any regard to the opinions of other men. But, in his commentary on the Fable of the Bees, he goes much further, and attempts to show that there is really no self-denial in the world, and that what we call a conquest is only a concealed indulgence of our passions. To establish this point, he avails himself of the ambiguity of language. The passion of sex he, in every case, calls lust; every thing which exceeds what is necessary for the support of life, he calls luxury; and thus confounding the innocent and reasonable gratifications of our passions with their vicious excesses, he pretends to show that there is really no virtue among men. "There are some of our passions," says Mr. Smith, "which have no other names except those which mark the disagreeable and offensive degree. The spectator is more apt to take notice of them in this degree than in any other. When they shock his own sentiments, when they give him some sort of antipathy and uneasiness, he is necessarily obliged to attend to them, and is from thence naturally led to give them a name. When they fall in with the natural state of his own mind, he is very apt to overlook them altogether, and either gives them no name at all, or, if he gives them any, it is one which marks rather the subjection and restraint of the passion than the degree which it is still allowed to subsist in after it is so subjected and restrained. Thus, the common names of the love of pleasure, and of the love of sex, denote a vicious and offensive degree of those passions. The words *temperance* and *chastity*, on the other hand, seem to mark rather the restraint and subjection in which they are kept under, than the degree which they are still allowed to subsist in. When he can show, therefore, *that they still* subsist in some degree, he immagines he

has entirely demolished the reality of the virtues of temperance and chastity, and shown them to be mere impositions upon the inattention and simplicity of mankind. Those virtues, however, do not require an entire insensibility to the objects of the passions which they mean to govern. They only aim at restraining the violence of those passions so far as not to hurt the individual, and neither to disturb nor offend the society."

"It is the great fallacy of Dr. Mandeville's book to represent every passion as wholly vicious, which is so in any degree, and in any direction. It is thus that he treats every thing as vanity which has any reference either to what are, or what ought to be, the sentiments of others; and it is by means of this sophistry that he establishes his favorite conclusion, that private vices are public benefits. If the love of magnificence, a taste for the elegant arts and improvements of human life, for whatever is agreeable in dress, furniture, or equipage, for architecture, statuary, painting, and music, is to be regarded as luxury, sensuality, and ostentation, even in those whose situation allows, without any inconveniency, the indulgence of those passions, it is certain that luxury, sensuality, and ostentation are public benefits, since, without the qualities upon which he thinks proper to bestow such opprobrious names, the arts of refinement could never find employment, and must languish for want of encouragement. Some popular ascetic doctrines which had been current before his time, and which placed virtue in the entire extirpation and annihilation of all our passions, were the real foundation of this licentious system. It was easy for Dr. Mandeville to prove, first, that this entire conquest never actually took place among men; and secondly, that, if it was to take place universally, it would be pernicious to society, by putting an end to all commerce and industry, and, in a manner, to the whole business of human life. By the first of these propositions he seemed to prove, that there was no real virtue, and that what pretended to be such was a mere cheat and imposition upon mankind; and by the second, that private vices were public benefits, since without them no society could prosper or flourish."

In the passage now quoted from Mr. Smith, a reference is made to a favorite opinion of Dr. Mandeville's, "that private vices are public benefits;" an opinion of which I have not hitherto had occasion to take notice, and which my present subject does not lead me particularly to examine. I shall therefore only remark, in addition to what Mr. Smith has said, that, in so far as Mandeville's reasonings on this point have any foundation in truth, they but authorize the following conclusion, that there are cases in which the selfish passions of individuals lead to a conduct useful to society, and in which private vices are rendered sources of public prosperity, by that overruling power which in this, as in many other instances, brings good out of evil.

But although it does not belong to my present subject to examine the truth of this very dangerous maxim, I cannot help remarking its striking inconsistency with the doctrine maintained by the same author in his inquiry concerning virtue. In that performance the *utility* of what is commonly called *virtue* is uniformly supposed. "Politicians," we are told expressly, "agreed to call every thing, which, without regard to the public, man should commit to gratify any of his appetites, *vice*, if in that action there could be observed the least prospect that it might either be injurious to any of the society, or even render himself less serviceable to others: And to give the name of *virtue* to every performance by which man, contrary to the impulse of nature, should endeavour the benefit of others, or the conquest of his own passions, out of a rational ambition of being good." How are these definitions to be reconciled with the proposition, "that private vices are public benefits?"

I shall not enter into a more particular examination of Mandeville's doctrines. I cannot, however, leave the subject without observing, that the *impression* which the author's writings produce on the mind affords a sufficient refutation of his principles. It was considered by Cicero as a strong presumption against the system of Epicurus, that "it breathed nothing generous or noble" (nihil magnificum, nihil generosum sapit;) and the same presumption will be found to apply with tenfold force to that

theory which has been now under our discussion. If there be no real distinction between virtue and vice—if the account given by Mandeville of the constitution of our nature be a just one—why do his reasonings render us *dissatisfied* with our own characters, or inspire us with a detestation and contempt for mankind? Why do we turn with pleasure from the dark and uncomfortable prospects which *he* presents to us, to the delightful and elevating views of human nature which are exhibited in those philosophical systems which he attempts to explode? It will be said, perhaps, that all this arises from pride or vanity. When we read Mandeville we are ashamed of the species to which we belong; while, on the contrary, our pride is gratified by those sublime but fallacious descriptions of disinterested virtue, with which the weakness or hypocrisy of some popular writers has flattered the moral enthusiasm of the multitude. But if Mandeville's account of our nature be just, whence is it that we come to have an idea of one class of qualities as more excellent and meritorious than another? Why do we consider pride or vanity as a less worthy motive for our conduct than disinterested patriotism or friendship, or a determined adherence to what we believe to be our duty? Why does human nature appear to us less amiable in *his* writings than in the writings of Addison? or whence the origin of those opposite sentiments which the very names of Addison and of Mandeville inspire? We shall admit the fact with respect to the *actual* depravity of man to be as he states it; but does not the impression his system leaves on the mind demonstrate that we are at least formed with the love and admiration of moral excellence, and that virtue was intended to be the law of our conduct? The question concerning the actual attainments of man must not be confounded with the question concerning the reality of moral distinctions. If Mandeville is successful in establishing his doctrine on the first of these points, the dissatisfaction his conclusions leave on the mind is sufficient to overturn his doctrine with respect to the latter. The remark of La Rochefoucauld, that "hypocrisy itself is an homage which vice renders to virtue," involves a satisfactory re-

ply to all the arguments that have been ever drawn from the prevailing corruption of mankind against the moral constitution of human nature.

It is the capital defect of this system to confound together the two questions I have just stated, and to substitute a satire on vice and folly instead of a philosophical account of those moral principles which form an essential part of our frame. That there is a great deal of truth mixed with the sophistry it contains, I am ready to acknowledge; and if the author's remarks had been thrown into the form of satires, many of them might have been useful to the world, by the light they throw on human character, and by the assistance which individuals may derive from them in examining their own motives of action. Some apology might have been made, in this case, for the colorings which the author's facts have borrowed from his imagination. The object of the satirist is to reform; and for this purpose it may sometimes be of use to exaggerate the prevailing vices and follies of the time, in order to contrast more strongly what mankind *are*, with what they *might* and *ought* to be. But the satirist who wishes well to his species, while he indulges his indignation against prevailing corruptions, will recollect that, if his censures are just, they presuppose the reality of moral distinctions; and while he laments the depravity of the race, and chastises the follies and vices of individuals, he will reverence morality as the *divine law*, and those essential principles of the human frame which bear the manifest signature of the divine workmanship. To attempt to depreciate these can never answer a good purpose. On the contrary, it has a tendency to fill the minds of good men with a desponding scepticism, and to stifle every generous and active exertion; and if it does not actually increase the depravity of the world, it tends at least to strengthen the effrontery of vice, and to expose the wiser and better part of mankind to the impertinent raillery of fools and profligates.

The following passage from Mr. Harris will form no improper conclusion to these observations. The sentiments it contains are equally just and refined, and do *much honor to* the benevolence of the author.

"As man is by nature a social animal, good humor seems an ingredient highly necessary to his character. 'T is the salt which gives the seasoning to the feast of life, and which, if it be wanting, surely renders the feast incomplete. Many causes contribute to impair this amiable quality, and nothing, perhaps, more than bad opinions of mankind. Bad opinions of mankind naturally lead us to misanthropy. If these bad opinions go further, and are applied to the universe, then they lead to something worse, for they lead to atheism. The melancholy and morose character being thus insensibly formed, morals and piety sink of course; for what equals have we to love, or what superior have we to revere, when we have no other objects left than those of hatred or of terror?

"Misanthropy is so dangerous a thing, and goes so far in sapping the very foundations of morality and religion, that I esteem the last part of Swift's Gulliver (*that* I mean relative to his Houyhnms and Yahoos) to be a worse book to peruse than those which are forbid as the most flagitious and obscene.

"One absurdity in this author (a wretched philosopher though a great wit) is well worth remarking. In order to render the nature of man odious, and the nature of beasts amiable, he is compelled to give human characters to his beasts, and beastly characters to his men; so that we are to admire the beasts, not for being beasts, but amiable men, and to detest the men, not for being men, but detestable beasts.

"Whoever has been reading this unnatural filth, let him turn for a moment to a *Spectator of Addison*, and observe the philanthropy of that classical writer; I may add the superior purity of his diction and his wit." *

* Works of James Harris, Esq. Vol. II. p. 582.

CHAPTER FIFTH.

ANALYSIS OF OUR MORAL PERCEPTIONS AND EMOTIONS.

Before proceeding to this extensive and difficult subject, I shall quote a passage from Dr. Butler, in which he has combined together, and compressed into the compass of a few paragraphs, all the most important arguments in proof of the existence of the moral faculty which have been hitherto under our review. While this quotation serves as a summary of what has already been stated, it will, I hope, prepare us for entering on the following discussions with greater interest and a more enlightened curiosity.

"That which renders beings capable of moral government is their having a moral nature, and moral faculties of perception and of action. Brute creatures are impressed and actuated by various instincts and propensities: so also are we. But, additional to this, we have a capacity for reflecting upon actions and characters, and making them an object to our thought; and on doing this we naturally and unavoidably approve some actions, under the peculiar view of their being virtuous and of good desert, and disapprove others as vicious and of ill desert. That we have this moral approving and disapproving faculty is certain from our experiencing it in ourselves, and recognising it in each other. It appears from our exercising it unavoidably in the approbation and disapprobation even of feigned characters: From the words, *right* and *wrong*, *odious* and *amiable*, *base* and *worthy*, with many others of like signification in all languages, applied to actions and characters: From the many written systems of morals which suppose it, since it cannot be imagined that all these authors, throughout all these treatises, had absolutely no meaning at all to their words, or a meaning merely chimerical: From our natural sense of gratitude, which implies a *distinction* between merely being the instrument of good

and intending it: From the like distinction every one makes between injury and mere harm, which Hobbes says is peculiar to mankind, and between injury and just punishment, a distinction plainly natural, prior to the consideration of human laws; it is manifest great part of common language and of common behaviour over the world is formed upon supposition of such a moral faculty, whether called conscience, moral reason, moral sense, or divine reason,—whether considered as a sentiment of the understanding, or as a perception of the heart,* or, which seems the truth, as including both. Nor is it at all doubtful in the general what course of action this faculty, or practical discerning power within us, approves, and what it disapproves. For, as much as it has been disputed wherein virtue consists, or whatever ground for doubt there may be about particulars, yet in general there is in reality an universally acknowledged standard of it. *It is that which all ages and all countries have made profession of in public,—it is that which every man you meet puts on the show of,—it is that which the primary and fundamental laws of all civil constitutions over the face of the earth make it their business and endeavour to enforce the practice of upon mankind, namely, justice, veracity, and regard to common good.*" †

Upon the various topics here suggested, a copious and instructive commentary might be written, but I think it better to leave them in the concise and impressive form in which they are proposed by the author.

The science of ethics has been divided by modern writers into two parts; the one comprehending the theory of morals, and the other its practical doctrines. The questions about which the former is employed are chiefly the two following: *First*, by what *principle* of our constitution are we led to form the notion of moral distinctions,—whether by that faculty which perceives the distinction between truth and falsehood in the other branches of human knowledge, or by a peculiar power

* There is here, I suspect, a typographical mistake. Butler, I have no doubt, wrote a *perception of the understanding*, or a *sentiment of the heart*.

† Dissertation on the Nature of Virtue subjoined to Butler's Analogy, 3d Ed.

of perception (called by some the moral sense) which is *pleased* with one set of qualities and *displeased* with another? *Secondly*, what is the proper object of moral approbation; or, in other words, what is the common quality or qualities belonging to all the different modes of virtue? Is it benevolence, or a rational self-love, or a disposition (resulting from the ascendant of reason over passion) to act suitably to the different relations in which we are placed? These two questions seem to exhaust the whole theory of morals. The scope of the one is to ascertain the origin of our moral ideas; that of the other to refer the phenomena of moral perception to their most simple and general laws.

The practical doctrines of morality comprehend all those rules of conduct which profess to point out the proper ends of human pursuit, and the most effectual means of attaining them; to which we may add, under the general title of *adminicles*, (if I may be allowed to borrow a technical word of Lord Bacon's) all those literary compositions, whatever be their particular form, which have for their aim to fortify and animate our good dispositions by delineations of the beauty, of the dignity, or of the utility of virtue.

I shall not inquire at present into the justness of this division. I shall only observe that the words *theory* and *practice* are not in this instance employed in their usual acceptations. The theory of morals does not bear, for example, the same relation to the practice of morals that the theory of geometry bears to practical geometry. In this last science all the practical rules are founded on theoretical principles previously established. But, in the former science, the practical rules are obvious to the capacities of all mankind, while the theoretical principles form one of the most difficult subjects of discussion that have ever exercised the ingenuity of metaphysicians.

Although, however, a complete acquaintance with the *practice* of our duty does not presuppose any knowledge of the theory of morals, it does not therefore follow that false theoretical notions upon this subject may not be attended with very pernicious consequences. On the

contrary, nothing is more evident than this, that every system which calls in question the immutability of moral distinctions has a tendency to undermine the foundations of *all* the virtues, both private and public, and to dry up the best and purest sources of human happiness. When sceptical doubts have once been excited in the mind by the perusal of such systems, no exhortation to the practice of our duties can have any effect; and it is necessary for us, before we think of addressing the heart, or influencing the will, to begin with undeceiving and enlightening the understanding. It is for this reason, that, in such an age as the present, when sceptical doctrines have been so anxiously disseminated by writers of genius, it appears to me to be a still more essential object in academical instruction, to vindicate the theory of morals against the cavils of licentious metaphysicians, than to indulge in the more interesting and popular disquisitions of practical ethics. On the former subject much yet remains to be done. On the latter, although the field of inquiry is by no means as yet completely exhausted, the student may be safely trusted to his own serious reflections, guided by the precepts of those illustrious men who, in different ages and countries, have devoted their talents to the improvement and happiness of the human race.

In this department of literature no country whatever has surpassed our own; whether we consider the labors of the great lights of the English church, or the fugitive essays of those later writers who (after the example of Addison) have attempted to enlist in the cause of virtue and religion, whatever aid fancy, and wit, and elegance, could lend to the support of truth. It is scarcely necessary for me to mention the advantage which may be derived in the same study from the philosophical remains of ancient Greece and Rome,—due allowances being made for some unfortunate prejudices produced or encouraged by violent and oppressive systems of policy. Indeed, with the exception of a few such prejudices, it may, with great truth be asserted, that they who have been most successful in modern times in inculcating the duties of life, have been the moralists who have trod

the most closely in the footsteps of the Greek and Roman philosophers. The case is different with respect to the theory of morals, which, among the ancients, attracted comparatively but a small degree of attention, although one of the questions formerly mentioned (that concerning the *object* of moral approbation) was a favorite subject of discussion in their schools. The other question, however, (that concerning the *principle* of moral approbation) with the exception of a few hints in the writings of Plato, may be considered as in a great measure peculiar to modern Europe, having been chiefly agitated since the writings of Cudworth in opposition to those of Hobbes; and it is this question accordingly, (recommended at once by its novelty and difficulty to the curiosity of speculative men) that has produced most of the theories which characterize and distinguish from each other the later systems of moral philosophy.

It appears to me that the diversity of these systems has arisen, in a great measure, from the partial views which different writers have taken of the same complicated subject; that these systems are by no means so exclusive of each other as has commonly been imagined; and that, in order to arrive at the truth, it is necessary for us, instead of attaching ourselves to any one, to avail ourselves of the lights which all of them have furnished. Our moral perceptions and emotions are, in fact, the result of different principles combined together. They involve a judgment of the understanding, and they involve also a feeling of the heart;* and it is only by attending to both that we can form a just notion of our moral constitution. In confirmation of this remark, it will be necessary for us to analyze particularly the state of our minds, when we are spectators of any good or bad action performed by another person, or when we reflect on the actions performed by ourselves.

* The same remark is made in a passage already quoted from Dr. Butler, whose slightest hints are entitled to attention, as they seem to have been all scrupulously and deliberately weighed. "It is manifest great part of common language, and of common behaviour over the world, is formed upon supposition of a moral faculty; whether called conscience, moral reason, moral sense, or divine reason; whether considered as a perception of the understanding, or as a sentiment of the heart, *or, which seems the truth, as including both.*"

On such occasions we are conscious of three different things:

(1.) The perception of an action as right or wrong.

(2.) An emotion of pleasure or of pain, varying in its degree according to the acuteness of our moral sensibility.

(3.) A perception of the merit or demerit of the agent.

SECTION I.

Of the Perception of Right and Wrong.

THE controversy concerning the origin of our moral ideas took its rise in modern times, in consequence of the writings of Mr. Hobbes. According to him we approve of virtuous actions, or of actions beneficial to society, from self-love, as we know that whatever promotes the interest of society has on that very account an indirect tendency to promote our own. He further taught, that, as it is to the institution of government we are indebted for all the comforts and confidence of social life, the laws which the civil magistrate enjoins are the ultimate standards of morality.

Dangerous as these doctrines are, some apology may be made for the author from the unfortunate circumstances of the times in which he lived. He had been a witness of the disorders which took place in England at the time of the dissolution of the monarchy by the death of Charles the First; and, in consequence of his mistaken speculations on the politics of that period, he contracted a bias in favor of despotical government, and was led to consider it as the duty of a good citizen to strengthen, as much as possible, the hands of the civil magistrate, by inculcating the doctrines of passive obedience and nonresistance. It was with this view that he was led to maintain the philosophical principles which have been already mentioned. He seems likewise to have formed a very unfavorable idea of the clerical order, from the instances which his own expe-

rience afforded of their turbulence and ambition; and on that account he wished to subject the consciences of men immediately to the secular powers. In consequence of this, his system, although offensive in a very high degree to all sound moralists, provoked in a more peculiar manner the resentment of the clergy, and drew on the author a great deal of personal obloquy, which neither his character in private life, nor his intentions as a writer appear to have merited.

Among the antagonists of Hobbes, the most eminent by far was Dr. Cudworth; and indeed modern times have not produced an author who was better qualified to do justice to the very important argument he undertook, by his ardent zeal for the best interests of mankind, by his singular vigor and comprehensiveness of thought, and by the astonishing treasures he had collected of ancient literature.

That our ideas of right and wrong are not derived from positive law, Cudworth concluded from the following argument: "Suppose such a law to be established, it must either be right to obey it, and wrong to disobey it, or indifferent whether we obey or disobey it. But a law which it is indifferent whether we obey or not, cannot, it is evident, be the source of moral distinctions; and, on the contrary supposition, if it is right to obey the law and wrong to disobey it, these distinctions must have had an existence antecedent to the law." * In a word, it is from *natural* law that *positive* law derives all its force.

The same argument against Hobbes is thus stated by Lord Shaftesbury.

"'T is ridiculous to say there is any obligation on man to act sociably and honestly in a formed government, and not in that which is commonly called the state of nature. For to speak in the fashionable language of our modern philosophy, society being founded on a compact, the surrender made of every man's private unlimited right into the hands of the majority, or such as the majority should appoint, was of free choice,

* Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments, Vol. II. pp. 334, 335. Sixth Edit.

and by a promise. Now the promise itself was made in a state of nature, and that which could make a promise obligatory in the state of nature must make all other acts of humanity as much our real duty and natural part. Thus faith, justice, honesty, and virtue, must have been as early as the state of nature, or they could never have been at all. The civil union or confederacy could never make right or wrong if they subsisted not before. He who was free to any villainy before his contract, will and ought to make as free with his contract when he sees fit. The natural knave has the same reason to be a civil one, and may dispense with his politic capacity as oft as he sees occasion; 't is only his work stands in the way. A man is obliged to keep his word. Why? because he has given his word to keep it. Is not this a notable account of the original of moral justice, and the rise of civil government and allegiance!"

To these observations it may be added, that our notions of right and wrong are so far from owing their origin to positive institutions, that they afford us the chief standard to which we appeal, in comparing different positive institutions with each other. Were it not for this test, how could we pronounce one code to be more humane, more liberal, or more equitable than another? or how could we feel that, in our own municipal regulations, some are consonant and others repugnant to the principles of justice. "Let any one," says a learned and judicious civilian, "acquaint himself with the sanguinary system of Draco, and then view it as tempered with the philosophy of Solon, and the softer refinements of a better age; let him look with the eye of speculation upon an establishment that directs 'not to seethe a kid in its mother's milk; nor to muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn; when our brother's cattle go astray or fall down by the way, not to hide ourselves from them; that acquits the betrothed damsel who was violated at a distance, and out of hearing, upon this compassionate suggestion,—for he found her in the field, and the betrothed damsel cried, and there was none to save her;' let him reflect, I say, on his own feelings

when he considers these different enactments, and then judge how far they agree with the philosophy of Hobbes." *

Agreeably to this view of positive instititutions, Demosthenes remarks, "The laws of a country may be regarded as a *criterion* for estimating the morals of the state, and the prevailing character of the people." I shall quote the passage I allude to in the version of the Latin translator. "Illud igitur vobis est etiam considerandum, multos Græcorum sæpe decrevisse, vestris utendum esse legibus: id quod vobis laudi haud injuriâ ducitis. Nam verum illud mihi videtur, quod quendam apud vos dixisse ferunt: OMNES CORDATOS IN EA ESSE SENTENTIA, UT LEGES NIHIL ALIUD ESSE PUTENT QUAM MORES CIVITATIS. Danda igitur est opera, ut eæ quam optimæ esse videantur." †

It is justly observed by Cudworth, that the doctrines now under consideration are not peculiar to the system of Hobbes; and that similar opinions have been entertained in all ages by those writers who were either anxious to flatter the passions of tyrannical rulers, or who had a secret bias to atheistic and Epicurean principles.

In confirmation of this remark, he takes a review of the principal attempts that have been made to undermine the foundations of morals, both in ancient and modern times, and interweaves with this history many profound reflections of his own. The following paragraphs contain the substance of this part of his work, and I hope will furnish an interesting as well as useful introduction to the reasonings I am afterwards to offer in vindication of the reality and immutability of moral distinctions.

"As the vulgar generally look no higher for the original of moral good and evil, just and unjust, than the codes and pandects, the tables and laws of their country and religion, so there have not wanted pretended philosophers *in all ages*, who have asserted nothing to be good and evil, just and unjust, ***naturally and immutably*** (*φύσει καὶ ἀκινήτως*;) but that all these things were

* Taylor on the Civil Law, p. 159. † Taylor, p. 160.

positive, arbitrary, and factitious only. Such Plato mentions," (in his Tenth Book de Legibus,) "who maintained, 'that nothing at all was *naturally* just, but men, changing their opinions concerning them perpetually, sometimes made one thing just, sometimes another; but whatever is decreed and constituted, that for the time is valid, being made so by acts and laws, but not by any nature of its own.' And Aristotle more than once takes notice of this opinion in his ethics. 'Things honest and just, which politics are conversant about, have so great a variety and uncertainty in them, that they seem to be only by law and not by nature.' And afterwards (Lib. 5. c. 10) having divided (*τὸ δίκαιον πολιτικὸν*) that which is politically just, into (*φυσικὸν*, *i. e.*) natural, which has every where the same force, and (*νόμιμον*, *i. e.*) legal, which, before there be a law made, is indifferent, but, when once the law is made, is determined to be just or unjust;" he adds, "Some there are that think there is no other just or unjust but what is made by law and men, because that which is natural is immutable, and hath every where the same force, whereas *jura* and *justa*, rights and just things, are every where different." The latter therefore, they conceive to be analogous to wine and wheat measures, which vary from place to place, according to local customs; the former they compare to the properties of *fire*, which produce the same effects in Persia and Greece.

"2. After these succeeded *Epicurus*, the reviver of the Democratical philosophy, the frame of whose principles must needs lead him to deny justice and injustice to be natural things; and, therefore, he determines that they arise wholly from mutual acts and covenants of men, made for their own convenience and utility. Those living creatures that could not make mutual covenants together not to hurt, nor to be hurt by one another, could not, for this cause, have any such thing as just or unjust among them. And there is the same reason for those nations that either will not, or cannot make such compacts: For there is no such thing as justice by itself, but only in the mutual congresses of men. Or (as

the late compiler of the Epicurean system expresses the same meaning) there are some who think that those things which are just are just according to their proper unvaried nature, and that the laws do not make them just, but only prescribe according to that nature which they have: But *the thing is not so.*" *

"3. And since in this latter age the physiological hypotheses of Democritus and Epicurus have been revived, and successfully applied to the solving of some of the phenomena of the visible world, there have not wanted some that have endeavoured to vent also those other paradoxes of the same philosophy, viz. that there is no incorporeal substance, nor any natural difference between good and evil, just and unjust, and to recommend the same under a show of wisdom, as the deep and profound mysteries of the atomical and corpuscular philosophy, as if senseless matter and atoms were the original of all things, according to the song of old Silenus in Virgil. Of this sort is that late writer of ethics and politics, who asserts 'that there are no authentic doctrines concerning just and unjust, good and evil, except the laws which are established in every city; and that it concerns none to inquire whether an action be reputed just or unjust, good or evil, except such only whom the community have appointed to be the interpreters of their laws.'

"In the state of nature (according to him) nothing can be *unjust*, and the notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice have there no place. Where there is no common power there is no law; where no law no transgression. No law can be unjust.† Nay, temperance is no more naturally right, according to this philosopher, than justice. Sensuality, in the sense in which it is condemned, hath no place till there be laws." ‡

* It may be proper to mention that Cudworth alludes here to Gassendi, who was at much pains to revive the philosophy of Epicurus, both in physics and morals, rejecting, however, or palliating those parts of it which are most exceptionable. With this philosopher (who appears to have been a most amiable and exemplary man in private life, and who, in learning, was not surpassed by any of his contemporaries,) Hobbes lived in habits of very intimate friendship during his long residence in France.

† Leviathan, p. 63. ‡ Ibid. p. 182.

"4. But whatsoever was the true meaning of these philosophers that affirm justice and injustice to be only by law, and not by nature, certain it is that diverse modern theologers do not only seriously but zealously contend in like manner, that there is nothing absolutely, intrinsically, and naturally good and evil, just and unjust, antecedently to any positive command or prohibition of God, but that the arbitrary will and pleasure of God, (that is an Omnipotent Being, devoid of all essential and natural justice) by its commands and prohibitions, is the first and only rule and measure thereof. Whence it follows unavoidably, that nothing can be imagined so grossly wicked, or so foully unjust or dishonest, but if it were supposed to be commanded by this Omnipotent Deity, must needs, upon that hypothesis, become holy, just, and righteous. For, though the ancient fathers of the Christian church were very abhorrent from this doctrine, yet it crept up afterwards in the scholastic age, Ockham being among the first that maintained that there is no act evil, but as it is prohibited by God, and which cannot be made good if it be commanded by him. And herein Petrus Alliacus and Andreas de Novo Castro, with others, quickly followed him."

"Now the necessary and unavoidable consequences of this opinion are such as these, that to love God is *by nature* an indifferent thing, and is morally good only because it is enjoined by his command: That holiness is not a conformity with the divine nature and attributes: That God hath no natural inclination to the good of the creatures, and might *justly* doom an innocent creature to eternal torment, all which propositions, with others of the kind, are word for word asserted by some late authors. Though I think not fit to mention the names of any of them in this place, excepting only one, *Joannes Sydlovius*, who, in a book published at *Franeker*, hath professedly avowed and maintained the grossest of them. And yet neither he nor the rest are to be thought any more blameworthy herein than many others that, holding the same premises, have either dissembled or disowned those conclusions which unavoidably follow therefrom, but rather to be commended for their openness, sim-

plicity, and ingenuity in representing their opinion naked to the world, such as indeed it is, without any veil or mask.

"Wherefore, since there are so many, both philosophers and theologians, that seemingly and verbally acknowledge such things as moral good and evil, just and unjust, yet contend, notwithstanding, that these are not by nature but institution, and that there is nothing naturally or immutably just or unjust; I shall from hence fetch the rise of this ethical discourse or inquiry concerning things good and evil, just and unjust, laudable and shameful, demonstrating, in the first place, that, if there be any thing at all good or evil, just or unjust, there must of necessity be something naturally and immutably good and just. And from thence I shall proceed afterwards to show what this natural, immutable and eternal justice is, with the branches and species of it."

The foregoing very long quotation, while it contains much valuable information with respect to the history of moral science, will be sufficient to convey a general idea of the scope of Cudworth's ethical inquiries, and of the prevailing opinions among philosophers upon this subject, at the time when he wrote. For the details of his argument I must refer to his work. It is sufficient for my present purpose to observe, that he seems plainly to have considered our notions of right and wrong as incapable of analysis, that is, (to use the language of more modern writers) he considered them as simple ideas or notions, of which the names do not admit of definition. In this respect also his philosophy differs from that of Hobbes, who, as we have already remarked, ascribes our moral judgments, not to an immediate perception of the qualities of actions, but to a view of their *tendencies*, which we approve or disaprove, according as they appear to be conducive or not to our own interest, or to that of society. Indeed, according to Hobbes, these two tendencies coincide, or rather are the same, for he apprehended that all our zeal for the public good originates in a selfish principle. "Man," he said, "is driven *to society* by necessity, and whatever promotes its in-

terest is judged to have a remote tendency to promote his own." Thus he attempts to *account* for our approbation of virtue by resolving it into self-love, and, of consequence, to resolve the notions expressed by the words *right* and *wrong* into other notions more simple and general. This theory I have already endeavoured to refute at some length, and I have only now to add to what was formerly remarked with respect to it, that, if it were agreeable to fact, the words *right* and *wrong* would be synonymous with *advantageous* and *disadvantageous;* and to say that these actions are right which are calculated to promote our own happiness would be an identical proposition.

Cudworth's opinion, on the contrary, led him to consider our perception of right and wrong as an ultimate fact in our nature. Indeed, to those whose judgments are not warped by preconceived theories, no fact with respect to the human mind can well appear more incontestible. We can define the words *right* and *wrong* only by synonymous words and phrases, or by the properties and necessary concomitants of what they denote. Thus,* "we may say of the word *right*, that it expresses what we *ought to do*, what is *fair* and *honest*, what is *approvable*, what *every man professes to be the rule of his conduct*, what *all men praise*, and what *is in itself laudable, though no man praise it.*" In such definitions and explanations it is evident we only substitute a synonymous expression instead of the word defined, or we characterize the quality which the word denotes by some circumstance connected with it or resulting from it as a consequence; and therefore, we may, with confidence, conclude that the word in question expresses a simple idea.

The two most important conclusions, then, which result from Cudworth's reasonings in opposition to Hobbes are these: First, That the mind is able to form antecedently to positive institution the ideas of right and wrong; and, secondly, That these words express simple ideas, or ideas incapable of analysis.

* Reid on the Active Powers, p. 228.

From these conclusions of Cudworth a further question naturally arose, how the ideas of right and wrong were formed, and to what principle of our constitution they ought to be referred? This very interesting question did not escape the attention of Cudworth. And, in answer to it, he endeavoured to show that our notions of moral distinctions are formed by *reason*, or, in other words, by the power which distinguishes truth from falsehood. And accordingly it became, for some time, the fashionable language among moralists to say that virtue consisted, not in obedience to the law of a superior, but in a conduct conformable to reason.

At the time when Cudworth wrote, no accurate classification had been attempted of the principles of the Human Mind. His account of the office of reason, accordingly, in enabling us to perceive the distinction between right and wrong, passed without censure, and was understood merely to imply, that there is an eternal and immutable distinction between right and wrong, no less than between truth and falsehood; and that both these distinctions are perceived by our rational powers, or by those powers which raise us above the brutes.

The publication of Locke's Essay introduced into this part of science a precision of expression unknown before, and taught philosophers to distinguish a variety of powers which had formerly been very generally confounded. With these great merits, however, his work has capital defects, and perhaps in no part of it are these defects more important than in the attempt he has made to deduce the origin of our knowledge entirely from *sensation* and *reflection*. To the former of these sources he refers the ideas we receive by our external senses,—of colors, sounds, hardness, &c. To the latter, the ideas we derive from consciousness of our own mental operations—of memory, imagination, volition, pleasure, pain, &c. These, according to him, are the sources of all our simple ideas; and the only power that the mind possesses is to perform certain operations of analysis, combination, comparison, &c. on the materials with which it is thus supplied.

It was this system of Locke's which led him to those

dangerous opinions that were formerly mentioned concerning the nature of moral distinctions, which he seems to have considered as entirely the offspring of education and fashion. Indeed, if the words *right* and *wrong* neither express simple ideas, nor relations discoverable by reason, it will not be found easy to avoid adopting this conclusion.

In order to reconcile Locke's account of the origin of our ideas, with the immutability of moral distinctions, different theories were proposed concerning the nature of virtue. According to one,* for example, it was said to consist in a conduct conformable to *truth*; according to another,† in a conduct conformable to the *fitness of things*. The great object of all these theories may be considered as the same, to remove right and wrong from the class of simple ideas, and to resolve moral rectitude into a conformity with some relation perceived by reason or by the understanding.

Dr. Hutcheson saw clearly the vanity of these attempts, and hence he was led, in compliance with the language of Locke's Philosophy, to refer the origin of our moral ideas to a particular power of perception, to which he gave the name of the moral sense. "All the ideas," says he, "or the materials of our reasoning or judging, are received by some immediate powers of perception, internal or external, which we may call *senses*. Reasoning or intellect seems to raise no new species of ideas, but to discover or discern the relations of those received."

According to this system, as it has been commonly explained, our perceptions of right and wrong are *impressions* which our minds are made to receive from particular actions, similar to the relishes and aversions given us for particular objects of the external and internal senses.

That this was Dr. Hutcheson's own idea appears from the following passage, in which he endeavours to obviate some dangerous notions which were supposed to follow from this doctrine. "Let none imagine that calling the

* Mr. Wollaston. † Dr. Clarke.

ideas of virtue and vice perceptions of sense, upon apprehending the actions and affections of another, does diminish their reality more than the like assertions concerning all pleasure and pain, happiness or misery. Our reason often corrects the report of our senses about the natural tendency of the external action, and corrects rash conclusions about the affections of the agent. But whether our moral sense be subject to such a disorder as to have different perceptions, from the same apprehended affections in an agent, at different times, as the eye may have of the colors of an unaltered object, it is not easy to determine; perhaps it will be hard to find any instance of such a change. What reason could correct if it fell into such a disorder, I know not, except suggesting to its remembrance its former approbations, and representing the general sense of mankind. But this does not prove ideas of virtue and vice to be previous to a sense, more than a like correction of the ideas of color in a person under the jaundice proves that colors are perceived by reason previously to sense."

Mr. Hume, whose philosophy coincides in this respect with Dr. Hutcheson's, has expressed himself on this subject still more explicitly. "As virtue is an end, and is desirable on its own account, without fee or reward, merely for the immediate satisfaction which it conveys, it is requisite that there should be some sentiment which it touches, some internal taste or feeling, or whatever you please to call it, which distinguishes moral good and evil, and which embraces the one and rejects the other."

"Thus the distinct boundaries and offices of *reason* and of *taste* are easily ascertained. The former conveys the knowledge of truth and falsehood; the latter gives the sentiment of beauty and deformity, vice and virtue. The one discovers objects as they really stand in nature, without addition or diminution; the other has a productive faculty, and gilding or staining all natural objects with the colors borrowed from internal sentiment, raises, in a manner, a new creation. Reason, being cool and disengaged, is no motive to action, and directs only the impulse received from appetite or inclination,

by showing us the means of attaining happiness or avoiding misery. Taste, as it gives pleasure or pain, and thereby constitutes happiness or misery, becomes a motive to action, and is the first spring or impulse to desire and volition. From circumstances and relations, known or supposed, the former leads us to the discovery of the concealed and unknown. After all circumstances and relations are laid before us, the latter makes us feel from the whole a new sentiment of blame or approbation. The standard of the one, being founded on the nature of things, is eternal and inflexible, even by the will of the Supreme Being. The standard of the other, arising from the internal frame and constitution of animals, is ultimately derived from that supreme will which bestowed on each being its peculiar nature, and arranged the several classes and orders of existence."

In the passage now quoted from Mr. Hume, a slight hint is given of his scepticism with respect to the immutability of moral distinctions; but, in some other parts of his writings, he has openly and avowedly expressed his opinions upon this important question. The words *right* and *wrong* (according to him) signify nothing in the objects themselves to which they are applied, any more than the words *sweet* and *bitter*, *pleasant* and *painful*, but only certain effects in the mind of the spectator. As it is improper, therefore, (according to the doctrines of some modern philosophers) to say of an object of taste that it is sweet, or of heat that it is in the fire, so it is equally improper to say of actions that they are right or wrong. It is absurd to speak of morality as a thing independent and unchangeable, inasmuch as it arises from an arbitrary relation between our constitution and particular objects. The distinction of moral good and evil is founded on the pleasure or pain which results from the view of any sentiment or character; and, as that pleasure or pain cannot be unknown to the person who feels it, it follows that there is just so much vice or virtue in any character as every one places in it; and that it is impossible in this particular we can ever be mistaken.*

* "Were I not *afraid of appearing too philosophical*, I should remind my reader of

Before we proceed to an examination of these conclusions, it may be worth while to remark, that they have not even the merit of originality; for we find from the Theætetus of Plato, as well as from other remains of antiquity, that the same scepticism prevailed among the Grecian sophists, and was supported by nearly the same arguments. Protagoras and his followers extended it to all truth, physical as well as moral, and maintained that every thing was relative to perception. The following maxims in particular have a wonderful coincidence with Hume's Philosophy. "Nothing is true or false any more than sweet or sour *in itself*, but relatively to the perceiving mind."—"Man is the measure of all things, and every thing is that and no other which to every one it *seems* to be, so that there can be nothing true, nothing existent distinct from the mind's own perceptions." This last indeed is mentioned as the fundamental principle of Protagoras's system. *Πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον ἄνθρωπον. Μέτρον ἕκαστον ἡμῶν εἶναι τῶντε ὄντων καὶ μή· τὰ φαινόμενα ἑκάστῳ, ταῦτα καὶ εἶναι.**

With respect to this sceptical philosophy as it is taught in the writings of Hume, it appears evidently, from what has been already said, to be founded entirely on the supposition, that our perception of the moral qualities of actions has some analogy to our perception of the sensible qualities of matter; and therefore it becomes a very interesting inquiry for us to examine how far this supposition is agreeable to fact. Indeed this is the most important question that can be stated with respect to the theory of morals; and yet I confess it appears to me that the obscurity in which it is involved arises chiefly, if not wholly, from the use of indefinite and ambiguous terms.

That moral distinctions are perceived by a sense is implied in the definition of a sense already quoted from Dr. Hutcheson. "All the ideas, or the materials of our reasoning or judging, are received by some immediate

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that famous doctrine, supposed to be fully proved in modern times, that tastes and colors, and all other sensible qualities, lie not in the bodies, but merely in the senses. The case is the same with beauty and deformity, *virtue and vice.*"—*Hume's Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects*, Edit. of 1784, Vol. I. Note F. p. 544.

* Plato. Theæt.

powers of perception, internal or external, which we may call senses. Reasoning or intellect seems to raise no new species of ideas, but to discover or discern the relations of those received." * If this definition be admitted, there cannot be a doubt that the origin of our moral ideas must be referred to a sense; at least there can be no doubt upon this point among those who hold, with Cudworth and with Price, that the words *right* and *wrong* express simple ideas. The latter of these authors, a most zealous opposer of a moral sense, (and although one of the driest and least engaging of our English moralists, yet certainly one of the most sound and judicious) grants that the words *right* and *wrong* are incapable of a definition, and considers a want of attention to this circumstance as a principal source of the errors which have misled philosophers in treating of this part of moral science. "'T is a very necessary previous observation," says he, "that *right and wrong denote simple ideas, and are therefore to be ascribed to some immediate power of perception in the human mind.* He that doubts needs only try to enumerate the simple ideas they signify, or to give definitions of them when applied, (suppose to beneficence or cruelty) which shall amount to more than synonymous expressions. From not attending to this, from giving definitions of these ideas, and attempting to derive them from *deduction* or *reasoning*, has proceeded most of that confusion in which the question concerning the foundation of morals has been involved. There are, undoubtedly, some actions that are ultimately approved, and for justifying which no reason can be assigned, as there are some ends which are ultimately desired, and for choosing which no reason can be given. Were not this true, there would be an infinite series or progression of reasons and ends subordinate to one another. There would be nothing at which to stop, and therefore nothing that could at all be approved or desired." †

It appears from the foregoing passage that Dr. Price, as well as Dr. Hutcheson, ascribes our ideas of moral

* Illustrations upon the Moral Sense, Section 1.
† Price's Review, &c. Section 3.

distinctions to an immediate power of perception in the mind, and therefore the difference between them turns entirely on the propriety of the definition of a *sense* which Dr. Hutcheson has given.

It may be further observed, in justification of Dr. Hutcheson, that the sceptical consequences deduced from his supposition of a *moral sense* do not necessarily result from it. Unfortunately, most of his illustrations were taken from the *secondary* qualities of matter, which, since the time of Descartes, philosophers have been in general accustomed to refer to the mind, and not to the external object. But if we suppose our perception of right and wrong to be analogous to the perception of extension and figure and other *primary* qualities, the reality and immutability of moral distinctions seem to be placed on a foundation sufficiently satisfactory to a candid inquirer. That our notions of primary qualities are necessarily accompanied with a conviction of their separate and independent existence was formerly shown; and, therefore, to compare our perception of right and wrong to our perception of extension and of figure, although it may not perhaps be very accurate or philosophical, does not imply any scepticism with respect to the immutability of moral distinctions; at least does not justify those sceptical inferences which Mr. Hume has endeavoured to deduce from Dr. Hutcheson's language.

The definition, however, of a sense, which Dr. Hutcheson has given, is by far too general, and was plainly suggested to him by Locke's account of the origin of our ideas. The words *cause* and *effect*, *duration*, *number*, *equality*, *identity*, and many others, express simple ideas as well as the words *right* and *wrong*; and yet it would surely be absurd to ascribe each of them to a particular power of perception. Notwithstanding this circumstance, as the expression *moral sense* has now the sanction of use, and as, when properly explained, it cannot lead to any bad consequences, it my be still retained without inconvenience in ethical disquisitions. It has been much in fashion among moralists since the time of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, nor was it an innovation introduced by them; for the ancients often speak of a

sensus recti et honesti; and, in our own language, *a sense of duty* is a phrase not only employed by philosophers, but habitually used in common discourse.

To what part of our constitution then shall we ascribe the origin of the ideas of right and wrong. Dr. Price (returning to the antiquated phraseology of Cudworth) says to the *understanding*, and endeavours to show, in opposition to Locke and his followers, that "the power which understands, or the faculty that discerns truth is itself a source of new ideas."

This controversy turns solely on the meaning of words. The origin of our ideas of right and wrong is manifestly the same with that of the other simple ideas already mentioned; and, whether it be referred to the understanding or not, seems to be a matter of mere arrangement, provided it be granted that the words *right* and *wrong* express qualities of actions, and not merely a power of exciting certain agreeable or disagreeable emotions in our minds.

It may perhaps obviate some objections against the language of Cudworth and Price to remark, that the word *reason* is used in senses which are extremely different: sometimes to express the whole of those powers which elevate man above the brutes, and constitute his rational nature,—more especially, perhaps, his intellectual powers; sometimes to express the power of deduction or argumentation. The former is the sense in which the word is used in common discourse; and it is in this sense that it seems to be employed by those writers who refer to it the origin of our moral ideas. Their antagonists, on the other hand, understand in general, by reason, the power of deduction or argumentation; an use of the word which is not unnatural, from the similarity between the words *reason* and *reasoning*, but which is not agreeable to its ordinary meaning. "No hypothesis," says Dr. Campbell, "hitherto invented hath shown that, by means of the discursive faculty, without the aid of any other mental power, we could ever obtain a notion either of the beautiful or the good." *

* Philosophy of Rhetoric, Vol. I. p. 204.

The remark is undoubtedly true; and it may be applied to all those systems which ascribe to *reason* the origin of our moral ideas, if the expressions reason and discursive faculty be used as synonymous. But if the word *reason* be used in a more general sense to denote merely our rational and intellectual nature, there does not seem to be much impropriety in ascribing to it the origin of those simple notions which are not excited in the mind by the immediate operation of the senses, but which arise in consequence of the exercise of the intellectual powers upon their various objects.

A variety of intuitive judgments might be mentioned involving simple ideas, which it is impossible to trace to any origin but to the power which enables us to form these judgments. Thus it is surely an intuitive truth, that the sensations of which I am conscious, and all those I remember, belong to one and the same being, which I call *myself*. Here is an intuitive judgment involving the simple idea of *identity*. In like manner, the changes which I perceive in the universe impress me with a conviction that some cause must have operated to produce them. Here is an intuitive judgment involving the simple idea of *causation*. When we consider the adjacent angles made by a straight line standing upon another, and perceive that their sum is equal to two right angles, the judgment we form involves the simple idea of *equality*. To say, therefore, that reason, or the understanding, is a source of new ideas, is not so exceptionable a mode of speaking as has sometimes been supposed. According to Locke, *sense* furnishes our ideas, and *reason* perceives their agreements or disagreements; whereas, in point of fact, these agreements or disagreements are in many instances simple ideas, of which no analysis can be given, and of which the origin must therefore be referred to reason, according to Locke's own doctrine.

In speaking of the hypothesis of a *moral sense*, I formerly observed that the expression was sanctioned by the example of the ancients. The same authority may be appealed to in justification of the language used by Cudworth and Price, whose ideas on the subject

seem indeed to be still more conformable to the spirit of the Greek philosophy. The *τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν*, for example, so much insisted on by Plato and others, was plainly considered by them as the faculty of reason; *τὸ φύσει δεσποτικὸν, τοῦτεστι τὸ λογιστικὸν*, says Alcinous de Doctrinâ Platonis.* In Plato's Theætetus, too, Socrates observes, "that it cannot be any of the powers of sense that compares the perceptions of all the senses, and apprehends the general affections of things, and particularly *identity*, *number*, *similitude*, *dissimilitude*, *equality*, *inequality*, to which he adds *καλὸν καὶ αἰσχρόν*; asserting that this power is *reason*, or the soul acting by itself separately from matter, and independently of any corporeal impressions and passions; and that, consequently, in opposition to Protagoras, knowledge is not to be sought for in sense, but in this superior part of the soul. *Μοι δοκεῖ—οὐδ' εἶναι τοιοῦτον οὐδὲν τούτοις ὄργανον ἴδιον,—ἀλλ' αὐτὴ δι' αὑτῆς ἡ ψυχὴ τὰ κοινά μοι φαίνεται περὶ πάντων ἐπισκοπεῖν.—Ὅμως δὲ τοσοῦτόν γε προβεβήκαμεν ὥστε μὴ ζητεῖν αὐτὴν (ἐπιστήμην) ἐν αἰσθήσει τὸ παράπαν, ἀλλ' ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ ὀνόματι, ὅ,τι πότ' ἔχει ἡ ψυχὴ, ὅταν αὐτὴ καθ' αὑτὴν πραγματεύηται περὶ τὰ ὄντα.* It seems to me, that, for the perception of these things, a different organ or faculty is not appointed,† but that the soul itself, and in virtue of its own power, observes these general affections of all things. So far we have advanced as to find that knowledge is by no means to be sought in sense, but in the power of the soul which it employs, when within itself it contemplates and searches out truth." ‡

The opinion we form, however, on this point, is of little moment, provided it be granted that the words *right* and *wrong* express qualities of actions. When I say of an act of justice that it is *right*, do I mean merely that the act excites pleasure in my mind, as a particular color pleases my eye, in consequence of a relation which

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* Chap. xxviii.

† Plato could not have expressed himself with greater precision had he been arguing against Hutcheson's doctrine of a *Moral Sense*.

‡ See upon this subject Cudworth's Immutable Morality, p. 100, *et seq.*, and Price's Review of the principal Questions and Difficulties in Morals, p. 50, 2d Edit.

it bears to my organ? or do I mean to assert *a truth* which is as independent of my constitution as the equality of the three angles of a triangle to two right angles? Scepticism may be indulged in both cases, about mathematical and about moral truth, but in neither case does it admit of a refutation by argument.

For my own part I can as easily conceive a rational being so formed as to believe the three angles of a triangle to be equal to *one* right angle, as to believe that if he had it in his power it would be *right* to sacrifice the happiness of other men to the gratification of his own animal appetites, or that there would be no *injustice* in depriving an industrious old man of the fruits of his own laborious acquisitions. The exercise of our reason in the two cases is very different; but in both cases we have a perception of *truth*, and are impressed with an irresistible conviction that the truth is immutable and independent of the will of any being whatever.

In the passage which was formerly quoted from Dr. Cudworth mention is made of various authors, particularly among the theologians of the scholastic ages, who were led to call in question the immutability of moral distinctions by the pious design of magnifying the perfections of the Deity. I am sorry to observe that these notions are not as yet completely exploded; and that, in our own age, they have misled the speculations of some writers of considerable genius, particularly of Dr. Johnson, Soame Jenyns, and Dr. Paley. Such authors certainly do not recollect, that what they add to the divine power and majesty they take away from his moral attributes; for, if moral distinctions be not immutable and eternal, it is absurd to speak of the *goodness* or of the *justice* of God. "Whoever thinks," says Shaftesbury, "that there is a God, and pretends formally to believe that he is *just* and *good*, must suppose that there is independently such a thing as *justice* and *injustice*, *truth* and *falsehood*, *right* and *wrong*, according to which eternal and immutable standards he pronounces that God is *just*, *righteous*, and *true*. If the mere will, decree, or law of God, be said absolutely to constitute

right and *wrong*, then are these latter words of no signification at all." *

In justice, indeed, to one of the writers above mentioned (*Dr. Paley*) it is proper for me to observe, that the objection just now stated has not escaped his attention, and that he has even attempted an answer to it; but it is an answer in which he admits the justness of the inference which we have drawn from his premises: or, in other words, in which he admits, that, to speak of the moral attributes of God, or to say that he is *just*, *righteous*, and *true*, is to employ words which are altogether nugatory and unmeaning. That I may not be accused of misinterpreting the doctrine of this ingenious writer, who on many accounts deserves the popularity he enjoys, I shall quote his own statement of his opinion on this subject. "Since moral obligation depends, as we have seen, upon the will of God, *right*, which is correlative to it, must depend upon the same. Right therefore signifies *consistency with the will of God*."

"But if the Divine will determine the distinction of right and wrong, what else is it but an identical proposition to say of God that he acts right? or how is it possible even to conceive that he should act wrong? Yet these assertions are intelligible and significant. The case is this, by virtue of the two principles, that God wills the happiness of his creatures, and that the will of God is the measure of right and wrong, we arrive at certain conclusions, which conclusions become rules; and we soon learn to pronounce actions right and wrong, according as they agree or disagree with our rules, without looking further; and when the habit is once established of stopping at the rules, we can go back and compare with these rules even the Divine conduct itself, and yet it may be true (only not observed by us at the time) that the rules themselves are deduced from the Divine will."

To this very extraordinary passage (some parts of which I confess I do not completely comprehend, but which plainly gives up the *moral attributes of God* as a

* Inquiry concerning Virtue, Part iii. Sect. 2.

form of words that conveys no meaning) I have no particular answer to offer. That it was written with the purest intentions, and from the complete conviction of the author's own mind, I am perfectly satisfied from the general scope of his book, as well as from the strong testimony of the first names in England in favor of the worth of the writer; but it leads to consequences of the most alarming nature, coinciding in every material respect with the systems of those scholastic theologians whom Dr. Cudworth classes with the Epicurean philosophers of old, and whose errors that great and excellent writer has refuted with so splendid a display of learning, and such irresistible force of argument.*

May I be permitted to add to these strictures that it is difficult to explain the following words of Scripture in any other sense than by applying them to such doctrines concerning the factitious origin of moral distinctions as have been now under our review?

"Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil; that put darkness for light and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter." †

SECTION II.

Of the agreeable and disagreeable Emotions arising from the Perception of what is Right and Wrong in Conduct.

It is impossible to behold a good action without being conscious of a benevolent affection, either of love or of respect, towards the agent; and consequently, as all our benevolent affections include an agreeable feeling, every good action must be a source of pleasure to the

* When Dr. Paley first appeared as an author, his reading on ethical subjects seems to me to have been extremely limited, and to have extended little further than to the works of that ingenious and well meaning but fanciful and superficial writer, Abraham Tucker,* author of *The Light of Nature Pursued.*—(See Dr. Paley's Preface.) The political part of Paley's book, although by no means unexceptionable, displays talents so far superior to the moral, that one would scarcely suppose them to have proceeded from the same pen. To his work on Natural Religion I am happy to be able to give unqualified praise.

† Isaiah, Ch. v. V. 28.

* *Mr. Tucker's works* were published under the fictitious name of Edward Search, Esq.

spectator. Besides this, other agreeable feelings, of order, of utility, of peace of mind, &c. come, in process of time, to be associated with the general idea of virtuous conduct.

Those qualities in good actions which excite agreeable feelings in the mind of the spectator, form what some moralists have called the *Beauty of Virtue.*

All this may be applied, *mutatis mutandis,* to explain what is meant by the *Deformity of Vice.*

This view of the moral faculty, which represents it as a species of *taste,* by which we are determined to the love of moral excellence, occurs very frequently in the works of the ancients. But I shall confine myself at present to *one* short quotation from *Cicero.* "Nec vero illa parva vis naturæ est rationisque, quòd unum hoc animal sentit quid sit ordo; quid sit, quod deceat; in factis dictisque qui modus. Itaque eorum ipsorum, *quæ adspectu sentiuntur,* nullum aliud animal pulchritudinem, venustatem, convenientiam partium sentit; *quam similitudinem natura ratioque ab oculis ad animum transferens, multo etiam magis pulchritudinem, constantiam, ordinem in consiliis factisque conservandum putat;* cavetque ne quid indecorè, effœminatève faciat; tum in omnibus et opinionibus et factis, ne quid libidinosè aut faciat aut cogitet: quibus ex rebus conflatur et efficitur id, quod quærimus, *honestum;* quod, etiam si nobilitatum non sit, tamen honestum sit; quodque verè dicimus, etiam si à nullo laudetur, naturâ esse laudabile. Formam quidem ipsam, Marce Fili, et tamquam faciem honesti vides; quæ si oculis cerneretur, mirabiles amores (ut ait Plato) excitaret sapientiæ." *

The same moralists who have applied to virtue and to vice the epithets I have now been endeavouring to define have remarked, that, as in natural objects, so also in the conduct and characters of mankind, there are two different species of beauty;—the one what is properly called *beauty* in the more limited and precise acceptation of the term; the other what is properly called *grandeur* or *sublimity.* The former naturally ex-

* De Off. Lib. i. C. 4. 5.

cites love toward the agent, the latter renders him an object of our admiration. To the former class belong the qualities of gentleness, candor, condescension, and humanity. To the latter, magnanimity, fortitude, inflexible justice, self-command, contempt of danger, and contempt of death; those qualities which, as exhibited in the character of *Cato*, formed in the judgment of Seneca a spectacle which Heaven itself might behold with pleasure. "Ecce spectaculum Deo dignum, ad quod respiciat Jupiter, suo operi intentus, vir fortis cum malâ fortunâ compositus." Illustrations of this kind abound in those writers who have adopted Shaftesbury's scheme of morals.

Without deciding at present on the propriety of the expressions *moral beauty* and *moral deformity*, it is of consequence for us to remark, that our perception of the qualities which these words are employed to denote is plainly distinguishable from our perception of actions as *right* or *wrong*. The latter involves a judgment with respect to certain attributes of actions, which no more depend on our perception than the primary qualities of body depend on the informations we receive of them by our external senses, or than the distinction between mathematical truth and falsehood depends on the conclusions of our understanding. The words *beauty* and *deformity*, on the other hand, have always a reference to the feelings of the spectator; to the delight or uneasiness which particular actions produce on the mind.

Nor are these perceptions distinguishable from each other merely in theory. The distinct operation of each in producing the moral sentiments of mankind is easily discernible by the most superficial observer; for although they are always in some degree combined together, yet they are not always combined in the same relative proportions. There are some men who, with *Marcus* in the play,* at the bare mention of successful iniquity, are "tortured even to madness;" while others, whose judgments with respect to morality are equally sound, possess that steady and dispassionate temper

* Addison's Cato.

"which looks on fraud, rebellion, guilt, and Cæsar, In the calm light of mild philosophy." The rectitude, therefore, of our moral judgments is by no means to be estimated by the liveliness of the impressions which good or bad actions produce on the mind. Indeed, the same circumstances which contribute to the accuracy of the former have in some respects a tendency to weaken the latter. These, like all other passive impressions, are rendered more languid by custom;* whereas constant exercise and a proper application of our intellectual powers in general are absolutely necessary to guard us against the various errors by which the power of moral judgment is liable to be perverted. The liveliness too of our moral feelings depends much on accidental circumstances; on constitutional temper, on education, on early associations, and, above all, on the culture which the power of imagination has received.

Notwithstanding, however, the reality and importance of this distinction, it has been but little attended to by the greater part of philosophers. The ancients had it in view when they spoke of the *honestum* and the *pulchrum*, the τὸ δίκαιον, and the τὸ καλόν; but the moderns seem in general to have overlooked it almost entirely, some of them confining their attention exclusively to the one perception, and some to the other. Clarke, for example, and his followers, neglecting the consideration of our moral *feelings*, have treated of this part of our constitution as if it consisted wholly of a power of distinguishing between right and wrong; and hence their works, how satisfactory soever to the understanding, seldom engage the imagination, or interest the heart. Shaftesbury, on the other hand, and his numerous admirers, by dwelling exclusively on our perception of moral beauty and deformity, have been led into enthusiasm and declamation, and have furnished licentious moralists with a pretence for questioning the immutability of moral distinctions. Even Dr. Hutcheson, one of the ablest and most judicious of his disciples,

* On further reflection this proposition seems to me somewhat doubtful. Perhaps it may be found that our moral impressions form a singular exception to this general law of our Constitution.

has contented himself with this partial view of our moral constitution. He every where describes virtue and vice by the *effects* accompanying the perception of them, and makes no distinction between the *rectitude* of an action as approved by our *reason* and its *gratefulness* to the *taste* of the observer, or its aptitude to excite his moral emotions.

Another erroneous conclusion of a very dangerous tendency has been suggested by the doctrines of Lord Shaftesbury's school. Accustomed to define virtue and vice by their agreeable or disagreeable effects on the mind of the spectator, his followers have been led to extend the meaning of these words far beyond their proper signification; and as virtue forms always an agreeable and vice a disagreeable object of contemplation, they have concluded that the converse of the proposition was equally true, and that every thing that was agreeable or disagreeable in human character or conduct might be properly expressed by the words *virtue* and *vice*. Accordingly, Hume, proceeding on the same general principles with Hutcheson, has been led to adopt this very conclusion as a fundamental truth in ethics, and even to introduce it into the definition which he gives of *virtue*, "virtue," according to his theory, "consisting in the possession of qualities which are useful or agreeable to ourselves or to others." * That this definition is erroneous, is sufficiently evident; for nothing can be plainer than that the words *virtue* and *vice* are applicable only to those parts of our character and conduct which depend on our own voluntary exertions. Sensibility, gaiety, liveliness, good humor, natural affection, are a source of pleasure to every beholder, and wherever they are to be found, entitle the possessor to the appellation of *amiable;* but in so far as they result from original constitution, or from external circumstances over which he had no control, they certainly do not render him an object of moral approbation.

A further inaccuracy in the philosophy of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson has arisen from the same source,

* Hume's Essays. London, 1784, vol. ii. p. 319.

the application of the epithets *virtuous* and *vicious* to the *affections of the mind.* In order to think with precision on this subject, it is necessary for us always to remember that the object of moral approbation is not *affections* but *actions.* The efforts, indeed, we make to cultivate our amiable affections are in a high degree meritorious, because the object of the effort is to add to the happiness of those with whom we associate, and because the effort depends upon ourselves; but the merit in such cases does not consist in the affection, but in the efforts by which it has been cultivated.

The result of the remarks now made on the systems of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson amounts to this, that they do not draw the line sufficiently between constitutional good qualities, and those which are voluntary and meritorious. In common discourse indeed we frequently apply the word *virtue* to both, but it is the *last* alone which in strict propriety deserves the name: And in our own case, it is of great consequence for us to attend to the distinction. In the case of others, as it is impossible for us to draw the line, and as the tendency of our nature is rather to think too unfavorably of our neighbours, it may be the safest rule to consider every action as meritorious which can be supposed, by any reasonable or plausible interpretation, to have probably or even possibly, proceeded from a virtuous motive. The author of the *Man of Feeling*, among the many beautiful features in the character of *Harley*, has not failed to remark this candid and amiable disposition. "Her benevolence," (he is speaking of his heroine Miss Walton) "was unbounded. Indeed the natural tenderness of her heart might have been argued by the frigidity of a casuist as detracting from her virtue in this respect, for her humanity was a *feeling* not a *principle.* But minds like Harley's are not very apt to make this distinction, and generally give our virtue credit for all that benevolence which is instinctive in our nature."

In offering these criticisms on the writings of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, I would not be understood to detract from their merits. I am fully sensible of the infinite service they have rendered to this branch of science,

similitudinem natura ratioque ab oculis ad animum transferens, multo etiam magis pulchritudinem, constantiam, ordinem in consiliis factisque conservandum putat.") And as the opinion we form concerning it has no connexion with any of the inquiries in which we have just been engaged, I was unwilling to distract the attention by mentioning any other. The philosophers now referred to have adopted a conclusion directly opposite to this, and have maintained that the words *beauty* and *sublimity* express, in their *literal* signification, the qualities of mind; and that material objects affect us only by means of the moral ideas they suggest. For my own part, I am not prepared to say any thing very decided either on the one side or the other, but I must confess that my present views rather incline to the last of these doctrines. The following considerations, in particular, seem to me to have great weight.

It is only in the case of our own minds that we have any direct or immediate knowledge either of intellectual or moral qualities. In the case of other men we know them only by their external effects; that is, either by the natural signs of intelligence and sentiment which we read in the countenance, or by the information we derive from artificial language, or by the inferences we draw from their conduct and behaviour. To all these external *effects*, but more particularly to the features of the countenance, we apply the epithet of *beautiful*. But I believe it will be found that this epithet is applicable to them *only*, or at least *chiefly*, in so far as they are *significant*. Into this question, however, when proposed in general terms, I shall not enter; nor shall I take upon me positively to say that there is no beauty in certain combinations of complexion and features, abstracted from any particular meaning. It is sufficient for my purpose, if it be granted, that the beauty of the human face consists *chiefly* in its expression; and about this it is impossible there can be any controversy. The human face, therefore, it would appear, is beautiful, *chiefly* as it presents to our conceptions the qualities of mind.

The same observation is applicable very nearly to

by rescuing it from the hands of monks and casuists, and restoring it to its ancient honors. The enthusiasm with which both of them have painted the charms of moral excellence, while it delights the imagination and exalts the taste, is admirably calculated to lay hold of the generous affections of youth, and to kindle in their breasts the glow of virtue. The *Rhapsody* of Shaftesbury in particular, whatever the blemishes in point of taste (and they are many) which a *critical* reader may find in it, will remain for ever a monument to the powers of his genius, as well as to the purity and elevation of his mind. It is in general free from the reprehensible sentiments which have given so much just offence in some of his earlier publications, and well merits the encomium which Thomson has bestowed on it in his enumeration of the illustrious names which have adorned the literary history of England.

> "The generous Ashly thine! the friend of man,
> Who scann'd his nature with a brother's eye,
> His weakness prompt to shade; to raise his aim,
> To touch the finer movements of the mind,
> And with the moral beauty charm the heart."

Still, however, I must again repeat, that it is chiefly on account of their *practical tendency* that I would recommend these two eminent writers; and that, in order to guard ourselves against the cavils of sceptics, it is necessary to look out for a more solid foundation to morality than their philosophy supplies.

I must not leave this subject of *moral beauty* without taking some notice of a speculation with respect to it, which formed one of the favorite doctrines of the Socratic school, and which Shaftesbury and some other modern writers have attempted to revive. In the observations I have hitherto made, I have proceeded on the supposition, that the words *beauty* and *sublimity* are applied to actions and characters metaphorically, or from an analogy between the emotions which certain moral qualities and certain material objects produce in the mind. *This*, which is certainly the more obvious and the more common doctrine, seems to have been adopted by Cicero in the passage which I already quoted, (—"quam

similitudinem natura ratioque ab oculis ad animum transferens, multo etiam magis pulchritudinem, constantiam, ordinem in consiliis factisque conservandum putat.") And as the opinion we form concerning it has no connexion with any of the inquiries in which we have just been engaged, I was unwilling to distract the attention by mentioning any other. The philosophers now referred to have adopted a conclusion directly opposite to this, and have maintained that the words *beauty* and *sublimity* express, in their *literal* signification, the qualities of mind; and that material objects affect us only by means of the moral ideas they suggest. For my own part, I am not prepared to say any thing very decided either on the one side or the other, but I must confess that my present views rather incline to the last of these doctrines. The following considerations, in particular, seem to me to have great weight.

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the material universe in general. The pleasurable emotion it excites in the mind of the peasant or mechanic is extremely trifling; but to those whose understandings have received such a degree of cultivation as to be enabled to read in it the characters of power, wisdom, and goodness, how sublime, how beautiful does it appear! Even in the case of particular objects it may be doubted whether the beauty of order and uniformity does not arise *partly* from some obscure suggestion of design and intelligence. I say *partly*, because, independent of any such considerations, order and uniformity please from the aids they afford to our powers of comprehenson and memory. If these observations are well founded, it will follow that it is *mind* alone that possesses *original and underived beauty;* and that what we call the beauty of the material world is chiefly, if not wholly, reflected from intellectual and moral qualities; as the *light* we admire on the disc of the moon and planets is, when traced to the original source, *the light of the sun.* The exclamation, therefore, of the poet in the following lines would appear, notwithstanding the enthusiasm which animates it, to be strictly and philosophically just.

> "Mind, mind alone, (bear witness earth and Heaven!)
> The living fountains in itself contains
> Of beauteous and sublime. Here hand in hand
> Sit paramount the Graces. Here enthron'd,
> Celestial Venus, with divinest airs,
> Invites the soul to never-fading joy."

If with these doctrines of the Socratic school we combine the fine and philosophical speculations of Mr. Alison with respect to the effect of *association*, they will be found to add greatly to the evidence of the general conclusion. Perhaps it may appear to some that the former speculations are resolvable into the latter. This, however, is not the case; for the former relate to *natural signs;* the latter to *arbitrary connexions established in the mind by habit.* In the mind of the philosopher (for example) who traces in the universe the signatures of the Divine perfections, the beauties he contemplates cannot, with propriety, be referred to association, any

more than the charms of a beautiful face the first time it is seen. But in a mind conversant with poetry, to which every object in nature recalls a thousand agreeable images, a great part of the pleasing effect must be referred to this source. Even here, however, *association* operates in a manner which illustrates and confirms the general theory, inasmuch as it produces its effect by making objects more *significant* than they were before; or, in other words, by rendering them the occasions of our conceiving intellectual and moral beauties, of which they are not naturally expressive.*

Whatever opinion we adopt on this speculative question, there can be no dispute about the fact, that good actions and virtuous characters form the most delightful of all objects to the human mind; and that there are no charms in the external universe so powerful as those which recommend to us the cultivation of the qualities that constitute the perfection and the happiness of our nature.

"Is aught so fair
In all the dewy landscapes of the spring,
In the bright eye of Hesper or the morn,
In nature's fairest forms, is aught so fair
As virtuous friendship? as the candid blush
Of him who strives with fortune to be just?
The graceful tear that streams for others' woes?
Or the mild majesty of private life,
Where peace with ever blooming olive crowns
The gate; where honor's liberal hands effuse
Unenvy'd treasures, and the snowy wings
Of innocence and love protect the scene?
* * * * * * *
"Look then abroad through nature, to the range
Of planets, suns, and adamantine spheres,
Wheeling unshaken through the void immense,
And speak, O man! does this capacious scene,
With half that kindling majesty dilate
Thy strong conception, as when Brutus rose,
Refulgent from the stroke of Cæsar's fate,
Amid the crowd of patriots; and his arm
Aloft extending, like eternal Jove
When guilt brings down the thunder, call'd aloud

* See the profound and eloquent reflections with which Mr. Alison concludes the first chapter of his admirable Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste, p. 62, *et seq.* last Edit.

On Tully's name, and shook his crimson steel,
And bade the father of his country Hail!
For lo! the tyrant prostrate in the dust,
And Rome again is free." *

It is no less evident that these two kinds of *taste*, (that for *natural*, and that for *moral* beauty) if not ultimately resolvable into the same principles, are at least very nearly allied, or very closely connected; insomuch that every author, who has treated professedly of the one, has been insensibly led to illustrate his subject by frequent references to the other. Hence in poetry the natural and pleasing union of those pictures which recall to us the charms of external nature, and that *moral painting* which affects and delights the heart. The intentions of nature, in thus associating the ideas of the *beautiful* and the *good*, cannot be mistaken. Much I am persuaded, might be done by a judicious system of education, in following out the plan which nature has herself, in this instance, so manifestly traced; as we find, indeed, *was* done to a very great degree in those ancient schools, who considered it as the most important of all objects to establish such an union between philosophy and the fine arts, as might add to the natural beauty of virtue every attraction which the imagination could give her. Some pleasing illustrations of this idea occur in the poetry of Akenside; and many striking proofs of the practicability of the attempt might be drawn from the examples we daily see of the influence of association in concealing the meanness and deformity of fashionable vices.

In enforcing, indeed, the precepts of practical morality as well as in conducting the business of general education, the ancients possessed important advantages over us. An unfortunate separation had not then taken place between the active and the speculative professions; nor was philosophy understood to be merely a fit subject of declamation and dispute for the period of academical instruction, which the experience of real

* Nobly as this scene is painted by Akenside, he has rather weakened, by his amplifications, the effect of the simple narrative of Cicero. "Cæsare interfecto, statim cruentum alte extollens M. Brutus pugionem, Ciceronem nominatim exclamavit, atque ei recuperatam libertatem est gratulatus."—*Cic. Phil.* Sec. 12.

life was soon to efface from the memory. The teachers of moral truth were men who had been themselves engaged in the important concerns of their country, and who ennobled their precepts by the lustre of their own example; and it was from *their* schools—"warm," as the poet expresses it, "*from the schools of glory*," that the youth entered on the pursuits of business, or the career of ambition. "Magnus ex hoc usus, multum constantiæ, plurimum judicii juvenibus statim contingebat, in mediâ luce studentibus et inter ipsa discrimina." As for us, since the manners of modern Europe have rendered such a plan of education impossible by relegating philosophy to the shade of monastic retirement, what remains but to avail ourselves of the monuments which these illustrious men have left of their genius and of their virtues; and by exhibiting to youth the precepts of ancient wisdom dignified by the splendor of heroic action, to weaken as far as may be those prevailing and fatal prejudices which lead the dissipated and the thoughtless to apprehend, that in a conscientious regard to moral obligation, there is any thing incompatible with an enlightened understanding or a magnanimous spirit! It is fortunate for this purpose that the common system of education in this country, amidst all its defects, by inspiring the tender mind with a warm admiration of classical genius, has a tendency to associate in the imagination the noblest lessons of public and private virtue with all that can captivate the heart or delight the fancy. A judicious selection from the classics directed to this particular object of moral instruction, and cleared of all those erroneous maxims which originate in the peculiar manners and policy of antiquity, or in the superstitious opinions of heathen world, is still an important *desideratum* in our literature.

It would be improper to bring this subject to a conclusion without mentioning the attempt which Mr. Hume has made to show, that what we call the Beauty of Virtue is the Beauty of Utility. For a particular examination and refutation of this opinion I shall refer the reader to Mr. Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments.

Although, however, Mr. Smith differs from Mr. Hume in thinking that virtue pleases *because* we consider it to be *useful*, he agrees with him that all those qualities which we consider as amiable or agreeable are really useful either to ourselves or to others. In this respect their conclusions coincide with the doctrines of the Socratic school, and afford additional evidence of the beneficent solicitude with which nature allures us to the practice of our duty.

"Do you imagine," says Socrates to Aristippus, "that what is good is not beautiful? Have you not observed that these appearances always coincide? Virtue, for instance, in the same respect as to which we call it good, is ever acknowledged to be beautiful also. In the character we always join the two denominations together.* The beauty of human bodies corresponds, in like manner, with that economy of parts which constitutes them good; and in every circumstance of life the same object is constantly accounted both beautiful and good, inasmuch as it answers the purposes for which it was designed." †

SECTION III.

Of the Perception of Merit and Demerit.

The various actions performed by other men not only excite in our minds a benevolent affection towards them, or a disposition to promote their happiness, but impress us with a sense of the merit of the agents. We perceive them to be the proper objects of love and esteem, and that it is morally right that they should receive their reward. We feel ourselves called on to make their worth known to the world, in order to procure them the favor and respect they deserve; and if we allow it to remain secret we are conscious of injustice in suppressing the natural language of the heart.

On the other hand when we are witnesses of an act of

* Which the Athenians did by the words καλοκάγαθος and καλοκαγαθία.
† Xenoph. Memorab. Lib. iii. c. 8. (The Translation is Akenside's.)

selfishness, of cruelty, or of oppression, whether we ourselves are sufferers or not, we are not only inspired with aversion and hatred towards the delinquent, but find it difficult to restrain our indignation from breaking loose against him. By this natural impulse of the mind a check is imposed on the bad passions of individuals, and a provision is made even before the establishment of positive laws for the good order of society.

In our own case how delightful are our feelings when we are conscious of doing well? By a species of instinct we know ourselves to be the object of the esteem and attachment of our fellow creatures, and we feel, with the evidence of a perception, that Heaven smiles on our labors, and that we enjoy the approbation and favor of the invisible witness of our conduct. Hence it is that we not only have a sense of *merit*, but an anticipation of *reward*, and look forward to the future with increased confidence and hope. Nor is this confidence weakened, provided we retain our integrity unshaken by the strokes of adverse fortune, but, on the contrary, we feel it increase in proportion to the efforts that we have occasion to make; and even in the moment of danger and of death it exhorts us to persevere, and assures us that all will be finally well with us. Hence the additional heroism of the brave when they draw the sword in a worthy cause. They feel themselves animated with tenfold strength, relying on the succor of an invisible arm, and seeming to trust, while employed in promoting the beneficent purposes of Providence, "that guardian angels combat on their side." Although, however, this sense of merit which accompanies the performance of good actions convinces the philosopher of the connexion which the Deity has established between virtue and happiness, he does not proceed on the supposition, that on particular occasions miraculous interpositions are to be made in his favor. That virtue is the most direct road to happiness he sees to be the case even in this world; but he knows that the Deity governs by general laws; and when he feels himself disappointed in the attainment of his wishes, he acquiesces in his lot, and looks forward with hope to futurity. It is an error of

the vulgar to expect that good or bad fortune is, *even in this world*, to be the immediate consequence of good or bad actions,—a prejudice of which we may trace the influence in all ages and nations, but more particularly in times of superstition and ignorance. From this error arose the practices of *judicial combat*, and of *trial by ordeal*, both of which formerly prevailed in this part of the world, and of which the latter (as appears from the Asiatic Researches) kept its ground in Hindostan as late as 1784,* and probably keeps its ground at this day. Absurd as these ideas are, they show strongly how natural to the human mind are the sentiments now under consideration; for this belief of the connexion between *virtue* and *good fortune* has plainly taken its rise from the natural connexion between the ideas of *virtue* and *merit*, a connexion which, we may rest assured, is agreeable to the general laws by which the universe is governed, but which the slightest reflection may satisfy us cannot always correspond with the order of events in such a world as we inhabit at present.

I am not certain but we may trace something of the same kind in the sports of children, who have all a notion that *good* fortune in their games of chance depends upon perfect *fairness* towards their adversaries, and that those are certain to lose who attempt to take secretly any undue advantage.

> "Pueri ludentes, 'Rex eris,' aiunt,
> 'Si rectà facies'" †

Indeed the moral perceptions (although frequently misapplied in consequence of the weakness of reason and the want of experience) may be as distinctly traced in the mind at that time of life as ever afterwards, when

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* "In the code of the Gentoo laws mention is made of the trial by ordeal, which was one of the first laws instituted by Moses among the Jews. See Numbers, chap. v. from the 12th to the 31st verse.) Fire or water were usually employed; but in India the mode varies, and is often determined by the choice of the parties. I remember a letter from a man of rank, who was accused of corresponding in time of war with the enemy, in which he says, 'Let my accuser be produced; let me see him face to face; let the most venomous snakes be put into a pot; let us put our hands into it together; let it be covered for a certain time; and he who remaineth unhurt shall be innocent.'"

"This trial is always accompanied with the solemnities of a religious ceremony." —(*Crawford's Sketches of the Hindoos*, p. 298. Ed. of 1790.)

† Horat. Epist. Lib. i. Ep. 1. l. 59.

surely it cannot be supposed that they are the result, as some authors have held, of a conviction, founded on actual observation, of the *utility* of virtue.

I shall conclude this subject with again recalling to the attention of the reader a very remarkable fact formerly stated, that our moral emotions seem to be stronger with respect to the conduct of others than our own. A man who can be guilty, apparently without remorse, of the most flagrant injustice, will yet feel the warmest indignation against a similar act of injustice in another; and the best of men know it to be in many cases an useful rule, before they determine on any particular conduct, to consider how they would judge of the conduct of another in the same circumstances. "Do to others as ye would that they should do unto you." This is owing to the influence of self-partiality and self-deceit. Mr. Smith has been so much struck with the difference of our moral judgments in our own case and in that of another, that he has concluded conscience to be *only* an application to ourselves of those rules which we have collected, from observing our feelings in cases in which we are not personally concerned. I shall afterwards state some objections to which this opinion is liable.

Were it not for the influence of self-deceit, it could hardly happen that a man should habitually act in direct opposition to his moral principles. We know, however, that this is but too frequently the case. The most perfect conviction of the obligation of virtue, and the strongest moral feelings, will be of little use in regulating our conduct, unless we are at pains to attend constantly to the state of our own character, and to scrutinize with the most suspicious care the motives of our actions. Hence the importance of the precept so much recommended by the moralists of all ages,—"Know yourself."

These observations may convince us still more of the truth of what I have elsewhere remarked with respect to *sentimental reading*, and of its total insufficiency for forming a virtuous character without many other precautions.* Where its effects are corrected by habits

* Philosophy of the Human Mind, vol. i. Sixth Edit. p. 524. *et seq.*

of business, and every instance of conduct is *brought home* by the reader to himself, it may be a source of solid improvement; for although strong moral feelings do by no means alone constitute virtue, yet they add to the satisfaction we derive from the discharge of our duty, and they increase the interest we take in the prosperity of virtue in the world.

CHAPTER SIXTH.

OF MORAL OBLIGATION.

ACCORDING to some systems, moral obligation is founded entirely on our belief that virtue is enjoined by the command of God. But how, it may be asked, does this belief impose an obligation? Only one of two answers can be given. Either that there is a moral fitness that we should conform our will to that of the Author and the Governor of the universe; or that a rational self-love should induce us, from motives of prudence, to study every means of rendering ourselves acceptable to the Almighty Arbiter of happiness and misery. On the first supposition we reason in a circle. We resolve our sense of moral obligation into our sense of religion, and the sense of religion into that of moral obligation.

The other system, which makes virtue a mere matter of prudence, although not so obviously unsatisfactory, leads to consequences which sufficiently invalidate every argument in its favor. Among others it leads us to conclude, 1. That the disbelief of a future state absolves from all moral obligation, excepting in so far as we find virtue to be conducive to our present interest: 2. That a being independently and completely happy cannot have any moral perceptions or any moral attributes.

But further, the notions of reward and punishment presuppose the notions of right and wrong. They are sanctions of virtue, or additional motives to the practice of it, but they suppose the existence of some previous obligation.

In the last place, if moral obligation be constituted by a regard to our situation in another life, how shall the existence of a future state be proved, or even rendered probable by the light of nature? or how shall we discover what conduct is acceptable to the Deity? The truth is, that the strongest presumption for such a state is deduced from our natural notions of right and wrong;

of merit and demerit; and from a comparison between these and the general course of human affairs.

It is absurd, therefore, to ask *why* we are bound to practise virtue. The very notion of virtue implies the notion of obligation. Every being who is conscious of the distinction between right and wrong carries about with him a law which he is bound to observe, notwithstanding he may be in total ignorance of a future state. "What renders obnoxious to punishment," as Dr. Butler has well remarked, "is not the foreknowledge of it, but merely the violating a known obligation." Or (as Plato has expressed the same idea,) *τὸ μὲν ὀρθὸν νομός ἐστι βασιλικός.**

From what has been stated, it follows that the moral faculty, considered as an active power of the mind, differs essentially from all the others hitherto enumerated. The least violation of its authority fills us with remorse. On the contrary, the greater the sacrifices we make in obedience to its suggestions, the greater are our satisfaction and triumph.

The supreme authority of conscience, although beautifully described by many of the ancient moralists, was not sufficiently attended to by modern writers as a fundamental principle in the science of ethics till the time of Dr. Butler. Too little stress is laid on it by Lord Shaftesbury; and the omission is the chief defect in his system of morals. Shaftesbury's opinion, however, although he does not state it explicitly in his Enquiry, seems to have been precisely the same at bottom with that of Butler.†

With respect to Dr. Butler, I shall take this opportunity of remarking, that in his Sermons on Human Nature, in the Preface to his Sermons, and in a short Dissertation on Virtue annexed to his *Analogy*, he has, in my humble opinion, gone further towards a just explanation of our moral constitution than any other modern philosopher. Without aiming at the praise of novelty or of refinement, he has displayed singular penetration

* Minos.

† See his Advice to an Author, Part i. Sect 2, paragraph 1st and 2d.

and sagacity in availing himself of what was sound in former systems, and in supplying their defects. He is commonly considered as an uninteresting and obscure writer: but, for my own part, I never could perceive the slightest foundation for such a charge; though I am ready to grant that he pays little attention to the graces of composition, and that the construction of his sentences is frequently unskilful and unharmonious. As to the charge of obscurity, which he himself anticipated from the nature of his subject, he has replied to it in the most satisfactory manner in the preface already referred to. I think it proper to add, that I would by no means propose these sermons, (which were originally preached before the learned Society of Lincoln's Inn) as models for the pulpit. I consider them merely in the light of philosophical essays. In the same volume with them, however, are to be found some practical and characteristical discourses, which are peculiarly interesting and impressive, particularly the sermons on *self-deceit* and on *the character of Balaam;* both of which evince an intimate acquaintance with the springs of human action, rarely found in union with speculative and philosophical powers of so high an order. The chief merit, at the same time, of Butler as an ethical writer, undoubtedly lies in what he has written on *the Supreme Authority of Conscience* as the governing principle of human conduct,—a doctrine which he has placed in the strongest and happiest lights; and which, before his time, had been very little attended to by the moderns. It is sometimes alluded to by Lord Shaftesbury, but so very slightly, as almost to justify the censure which Butler bestows on this part of his writings.

The scope of Butler's own reasonings may be easily conceived from the passage of Scripture which he has chosen as the groundwork of his argument: "For when the gentiles which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves."

One of the clearest and most concise statements of this doctrine that I have met with is in a sermon on the Nature and Obligations of Virtue, by Dr. Adams of

Oxford; the justness of whose ideas on this subject makes it the more surprising that his pupil and friend, Dr. Samuel Johnson, should have erred so very widely from the truth. "*Right*," says he, "implies *duty* in its idea. To perceive an action to be right is to see a reason for doing it in the action itself, abstracted from all other considerations whatever; and this perception, this acknowledged rectitude in the action, is the very essence of obligation, that which commands the approbation and choice, and binds the conscience of every rational human being."—"Nothing can bring us under an obligation to do what appears to our moral judgment *wrong*. It may be supposed our interest to do this, but it cannot be supposed our duty. For, I ask, if some power, which we are unable to resist, should assume the command over us, and give us laws which are unrighteous and unjust, should we be under an obligation to obey him? Should we not rather be obliged to shake off the yoke, and to resist such usurpation, if it were in our power? However, then, we might be swayed by hope or fear, it is plain that we are under an obligation to *right*, which is antecedent, and in order and nature superior to all other. Power may compel, interest may bribe, pleasure may persuade, but reason only can oblige. This is the only authority which rational beings can own, and to which they owe obedience."

Dr. Clarke has expressed himself nearly to the same purpose. "The judgment and conscience of a man's own mind concerning the reasonableness and fitness of the thing is the truest and formallest obligation; for whoever acts contrary to this sense and conscience of his own mind is necessarily *self-condemned*; and the greatest and strongest of all obligations is that which a man cannot break through without condemning himself. So far, therefore, as men are conscious of what is *right* and *wrong*, so far they are under an obligation to act accordingly."

I would not have quoted so many passages in illustration of a point which appears to myself so very obvious, if I had not been anxious to counteract the authority of some eminent writers who have lately espoused a very

different system, by showing how widely they have departed from the sound and philosophical views of their predecessors. I confess, too, I should have distrusted my own judgment, if, on a question so interesting to human happiness, and so open to examination, I had been led, by any theoretical refinements, to a conclusion which was not sanctioned by the concurrent sentiments of other impartial inquirers. The fact, however, is, that as this view of human nature is the most simple, so it is the most ancient which occurs in the history of moral science. It was the doctrine of the Pythagorean school, as appears from a fragment of *Theages*, a Pythagorean writer, published in Gale's *Opuscula Mythologica*.* It is also explained by Plato in some of his Dialogues, in which he compares the soul to a commonwealth, and *reason* to the council of state, which governs and directs the whole.

Cicero has expressed the same system very clearly and concisely. "Duplex enim est vis animorum atque naturæ. Una pars in appetitu posita est, quæ hominem huc et illuc rapit, quæ est ὁρμὴ Græce; altera in ratione, quæ docet et explanat, quid faciendum fugiendumve sit. Ita fit ut ratio præsit, appetitus obtemperet." In the following passage this doctrine is enforced in a manner peculiarly sublime and expressive.

"Est quidem vera *Lex*, recta ratio, naturæ congruens, diffusa in omnes, constans, sempiterna, quæ vocet ad officium jubendo, vetando a fraude deterreat. Nec erit alia Lex Romæ, alia Athenis, alia, nunc alia posthac; sed et omnes gentes, et omni tempore, una lex et sempiterna et immortalis continebit; unusque erit communis quasi magister et imperator omnium Deus. Ille hujus legis inventor, disceptator, lator. Cui qui non parebit, ipse se fugiet, ac naturam hominis aspernabitur; hoc ipso luet maximas pœnas, etiamsi cætera supplicia, quæ putantur, effugerit." †

It is very justly observed by Mr. Smith, (and I consider the remark as of the highest importance) that "if

* Opuscula Mythologica Physica et Ethica. Amstel. 1688, p. 688, *et seq.*
† Fragment. Cic. de Repub. Lib. iii.

the distinction pointed out in the foregoing quotations between the moral faculty and our other active powers be acknowledged, it is of the less consequence what particular theory we adopt concerning the origin of our moral ideas." And accordingly, though he resolves moral approbation ultimately into *a feeling of the mind*, he nevertheless represents the supremacy of conscience as a principle which is equally essential to all the different systems that have been proposed on the subject. "Upon whatever we suppose our moral faculties to be founded," I quote his own words, "whether upon a certain modification of reason, upon an original instinct called a moral sense, or upon some other principle of our nature, it cannot be doubted that they are given us for the direction of our conduct in this life. They carry along with them the most evident badges of their authority, which denote that they were set up within us to be the supreme arbiters of all our actions; to superintend all our senses, passions, and appetites; and to judge how far each of them was to be either indulged or restrained. Our moral faculties are by no means, as some have pretended, upon a level in this respect with the other faculties and appetites of our nature, endowed with no more right to restrain these last, than these last are to restrain them. No other faculty or principle of action judges of any other. Love does not judge of resentment, nor resentment of love. Those two passions may be opposite to one another, but cannot, with any propriety, be said to approve or disapprove of one another. But it is the peculiar office of those faculties now under consideration to judge, to bestow censure or applause upon all the other principles of our nature." *

"Since these, therefore," continues Mr. Smith, "were plainly intended to be the governing principles of human nature, the rules which they prescribe are to be regarded as the commands and laws of the Deity, promulgated by those vicegerents which he has thus set up within us. By acting according to their dictates we may be said, in some sense, to cooperate with the Deity,

* Theory of Moral Sentiments, Vol. I. p. 410, 6th Edit.

and to advance, as far as in our power, the plan of Providence. By acting otherwise, on the contrary, we seem to obstruct, in some measure, the scheme which the Author of Nature has established for the happiness and perfection of the world, and to declare ourselves in some measure the enemies of God. Hence we are naturally encouraged to hope for his extraordinary favor and reward in the one case, and to dread his vengeance and punishment in the other. *

I have only to add further on this subject at present, that the supreme authority of conscience is felt and tacitly acknowledged by the worst no less than by the best of men; for even they who have thrown off all hypocrisy with the world, are at pains to conceal their real character from their own eyes. No man ever, in a soliloquy or private meditation, avowed to himself that he was a villain; nor do I believe that such a character as Joseph in the School for Scandal (who is introduced as reflecting coolly on his own knavery and baseness, without any uneasiness but what arises from the dread of detection) ever existed in the world. Such men, probably, impose on themselves fully as much as they do upon others. Hence the various artifices of self-deceit which Butler has so well described in his discourses on that subject.

"We may defend villany," says Lord Shaftesbury, "and cry up folly before the world. But to appear fools, madmen, or varlets *to ourselves*, and prove it to our own faces that we are really such, is insupportable. For so true a reverence has every one for himself when he comes clearly to appear before his close companion, that he had rather profess the vilest things of himself in open company than hear his character privately from his own mouth. So that we may readily from hence conclude, that the chief interest of ambition, avarice, corruption, and every sly insinuating vice, is to prevent this interview and familiarity of discourse which is consequent upon close retirement and inward recess." †

* Theory of Moral Sentiments, Vol. I. pp. 412, 413, 414, 415.
† Shaftesbury's Advice to an Author, Part i. Sect. 2.

Somewhat to the same purpose it is remarked by a late lively and ingenious, though eccentric writer, (Soame Jenyns) that "men's opinions much oftener proceed from their actions than their actions from their opinions. They act first, and then with great facility reconcile their principles to their conduct; for which reason we find many whom no advantage can induce to do any thing which appears to them wrong, but of that many very few who can ever be convinced that any thing is wrong from which either pleasure or profit accrues to themselves."

It is hardly necessary for me to observe, that there is no merit in our moral perceptions but in acting agreeably to them. We commonly, indeed, and justly consider the want of them as a mark of depravity, because we proceed on the supposition that every man has received them from nature, and that it is only by habits of profligacy that they can be eradicated.

How powerful their influence is over the mind appears remarkably from the general taste for moral novels and for tragedy, and from the enthusiastic rapture with which virtuous sentiments from the stage are uniformly received. "I am a man, and feel an interest in all mankind." (Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto.) It is said by St. Augustine, that at the delivery of this sentiment the whole Roman theatre resounded with applause.* We may venture to say that a similar sentiment, well pronounced by an actor, would at this day, in the most corrupted capital in Europe, be followed by a similar burst of sympathetic emotion.

"Voyez, à nos spectacles,
Quand on peint quelque trait de candeur, de bonté,
Où brille en tout son jour la tendre humanité,
Tous les cœurs sont remplis d'une volupté pure,
Et c'est là qu'on entend le cri de la nature." †

"On such occasions," as a late writer remarks, "though we may think meanly of the genius of the poet, it is impossible not to think, and to be happy in

* See a Note on this line in Colman's translation of the Self-Tormentor of Terence.

† Le Méchant, Comédie de Gresset.

thinking, highly of the people ;—the people whose opinions may often be folly, whose conduct may sometimes be madness, but whose sentiments are almost always honorable and just ;—the people whom an author may delight with bombast, may amuse with tinsel, may divert with indecency, but whom he cannot mislead in principle, nor harden into inhumanity. It is only the mob in the side boxes, who, in the coldness of self-interest, or the languor of out-worn dissipation, can hear unmoved the sentiments of compassion, of generosity, or of virtue." *

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‡ Account of the German Theatre by Henry Mackenzie, Esq. Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, Vol. II. Part II. p. 174.

CHAPTER SEVENTH.

OF CERTAIN PRINCIPLES WHICH COOPERATE WITH OUR MORAL POWERS IN THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE CONDUCT.

In order to secure still more completely the good order of society, and to facilitate the acquisition of virtuous habits, nature has superadded to our moral constitution a variety of auxiliary principles, which sometimes give rise to a conduct agreeable to the rules of morality and highly useful to mankind, where the merit of the individual, considered as a moral agent, is inconsiderable. Hence some of them have been confounded with our moral powers, or even supposed to be of themselves sufficient to account for the phenomena of moral perception, by authors whose views of human nature have not been sufficiently comprehensive. The most important principles of this description are, 1. A Regard to Character. 2. Sympathy. 3. The Sense of the Ridiculous. And, 4. Taste. The principle of Self-love (which was treated of in a former section) cooperates very powerfully to the same purposes.

SECTION I.

Of Docency, or a Regard to Character.

Upon this subject I had formerly occasion to offer various remarks in treating of *the desire of esteem.* But the view of it which I then took was extremely general, as I did not think it necessary for me to attend to the distinction between Intellectual and Moral qualities. There can be no doubt that a regard to the good opinion of our fellow creatures has great influence in promoting our exertions to cultivate both the one and the other; but what we are more particularly concerned to remark at present, is the effect which this principle has in strengthening our virtuous habits, and in restraining those passions which a sense of duty alone would not be sufficient to regulate.

I before observed, that the desire of esteem operates in children before they have a capacity of distinguishing right from wrong; and that the former principle of action continues for a long time to be much more powerful than the latter. Hence it furnishes a most useful and effectual engine in the business of education, more particularly by training us early to exertions of self-command and self-denial. It teaches us, for example, to restrain our appetites within those bounds which *delicacy* prescribes, and thus forms us to habits of moderation and temperance. And although our conduct cannot be denominated virtuous, so long as a regard to the opinion of others is our sole motive, yet the habits we thus acquire in infancy and childhood render it more easy for us to subject our passions to reason and conscience as we advance to maturity. The subject well deserves a more ample illustration; but at present it is sufficient to recall these remarks to the recollection of the reader.

SECTION II.

Of Sympathy.

THAT there is an exquisite pleasure annexed by the constitution of our nature to the sympathy or fellow feeling of other men with our joys and sorrows, and even with our opinions, tastes, and humors, is a fact obvious to vulgar observation. It is no less evident that we feel a disposition to accommodate the state of our own minds to that of our companions, wherever we feel a benevolent affection towards them, and that this accommodating temper is in proportion to the strength of our affection. In such cases sympathy would appear to be grafted on benevolence; and perhaps it might be found, on an accurate examination, that the greater part of the pleasure which sympathy yields is resolvable into that which arises from the exercise of kindness, and from the consciousness of being beloved.

The phenomena generally referred to *sympathy* have

appeared to Mr. Smith so important, and so curiously connected, that he has been led to attempt an explanation from this single principle of all the phenomena of moral perception. In this attempt, however, (abstracting entirely from the vague use which he occasionally makes of the word) he has plainly been misled, like many eminent philosophers before him, by an excessive love of simplicity; and has mistaken a very subordinate principle in our moral constitution (or rather a principle *superadded* to our moral constitution as an auxiliary to the sense of duty) for that faculty which distinguishes right from wrong, and which (by what name soever we may choose to call it) recurs on us constantly in all our ethical disquisitions, as an ultimate fact in the nature of man.

I shall take this opportunity of offering a few remarks on this most ingenious and beautiful theory, in the course of which I shall have occasion to state all that I think necessary to observe concerning the place which *sympathy* seems to me really to occupy in our moral constitution. In stating these remarks, I would be understood to express myself with all the respect and veneration due to the talents and virtues of a writer, whose friendship I regard as one of the most fortunate incidents of my life, but, at the same time, with that entire freedom which the importance of the subject demands, and which I know that his candid and liberal mind would have approved.

In addition to the incidental strictures which I have already hazarded on Mr. Smith's theory, I have yet to state two objections of a more general nature, to which it appears to me to be obviously liable. But before I proceed to these objections, it is necessary for me to premise (which I shall do in Mr. Smith's words) a remark which I have not hitherto had occasion to mention, and which may be justly regarded as one of the most characteristical principles of his system.

"Were it possible," says he, "that a human creature could grow up to manhood in some solitary place, without any communication with his own species, he could no more think of his own character, of the propriety or

demerit of his own sentiments and conduct, of the beauty or deformity of his own mind, than of the beauty or deformity of his own face. All these are objects which he cannot easily see, which naturally he does not look at, and with regard to which he is provided with no mirror which can present them to his view. Bring him into society, and he is immediately provided with the mirror which he wanted before. It is placed in the countenance and behaviour of those he lives with, which always mark when they enter into, and when they disapprove of his sentiments, and it is here that he first views the propriety and impropriety of his own passions, the beauty and deformity of his own mind."

To this account of the origin of our moral sentiments it may be objected, 1. That granting the proposition to be true, "that a human creature who should grow up to manhood without any communication with his own species, could no more think of the propriety or demerit of his own sentiments, than of the beauty or deformity of his own face," it would by no means authorize the conclusion which is here deduced from it. The necessity of social intercourse as an indispensable condition implied in the generation and growth of our moral sentiments, does not arise merely from its effect in holding up a mirror for the examination of our own character; but from the impossibility of finding, in a solitary state, any field for the exercise of our most important moral duties. In such a state the moral faculty would inevitably remain dormant and useless, for the same reason that the organ of sight would remain useless and unknown to a person who should pass his whole life in the darkness of a dungeon.

2. It may be objected to Mr. Smith's theory, that it confounds the *means* or *expedients* by which nature enables us to correct our moral judgments, with the principles in our constitution to which our moral judgments owe their origin. These means or expedients he has indeed described with singular penetration and sagacity, and by doing so, has thrown new and most important lights on *practical* morality; but, after all his reasonings on the subject, the metaphysical problem concerning

the primary sources of our moral ideas and emotions will be found involved in the same obscurity as before. The intention of such expedients, it is perfectly obvious, is merely to obtain a just and fair view of circumstances; and after this view has been obtained, the question still remains, what constitutes the obligation upon me to act in a particular manner? In answer to this question it is said, that, from recollecting my own judgments in similar cases in which I was concerned, I infer in what light my conduct will appear to society; that there is an exquisite satisfaction annexed to mutual sympathy; and that, in order to obtain this satisfaction, I accommodate my conduct, not to my own feelings, but to those of my fellow creatures. Now, I acknowledge, that this may account for a man's assuming the appearance of virtue, and I believe that something of this sort is the real foundation of the rules of good breeding in polished society; * but in the important concerns of life, I apprehend there is something more,—for when I have once satisfied myself with respect to the conduct which an impartial judge would approve of, I feel that this conduct is *right* for me, and that I am under a moral obligation to put it in practice. If I had had recourse to no expedient for correcting my first judgment, I would, nevertheless, have formed some judgment or other of a particular conduct as right, wrong, or indifferent, and the only difference would have been, that I should probably have decided improperly, from an erroneous or a partial view of the case.

From these observations I conclude, that the words *right* and *wrong*,† *ought* and *ought not*, express simple ideas or notions, of which no explanation can be given.

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* This remark I borrow from Dr. Beattie, who, in his Essay on Truth, observes, that "the foundation of good breeding is that kind of sensibility or sympathy by which we suppose ourselves in the situation of others, adopt their sentiments, and in a manner perceive their very thoughts." (P. 38, 2d Edit. Edin. 1771.) The observation well deserves to be prosecuted.

† Dr. Hutcheson, in his *Illustrations on the Moral Sense*, calls *ought* a *confused word*: "As to that confused word *ought*," &c. &c. (end of Section I.) But for this he seems to have had no better reason than the impossibility of defining it logically. And may not the same remark be applied to the words, *time*, *space*, *motion*? Was there ever a language in which these words, together with those of *ought* and *ought not*, were not to be found? *Ought* corresponds with the δεῖ of the Greeks, and the *oportet* and *decet* of the Latins.

They are to be found in all languages, and it is impossible to carry on any ethical speculation without them. Of this Mr. Smith himself furnishes a remarkable proof in the statement of his theory, not only by the occasional use which he makes of these and other synonymous expressions, but by his explicit and repeated acknowledgments, that the propriety of action cannot be always determined by the *actual* judgments of society, and that, in such cases, we must act according to the judgments which other men *ought* to have formed of our conduct. Is not this to admit, that we have a standard of right and wrong in our own minds, of superior authority to any instinctive propensity we may feel to obtain the sympathy of our fellow creatures?

It was in order to reconcile this acknowledgment with the general language of his system that Mr. Smith was forced to have recourse to the supposition of "*an abstract man* within the breast, the representative of mankind and substitute of the Deity, whom nature has constituted the supreme judge of all our actions." * Of this very ingenious fiction he has availed himself in various passages of the *first* edition of his book; but he has laid much greater stress upon it in the *last* edition, published a short time before his death.† An idea somewhat similar occurs in Lord Shaftesbury's Advice to an Author, where he observes with that quaintness of phraseology which so often deforms his otherwise beautiful style, that "when the wise ancients spoke of a demon, genius, or angel, to whom we are committed from the moment of our birth, they meant no more than enigmatically to declare, 'That we have each of us a patient in ourselves: that we are properly our own subjects of practice: and that we then become due practitioners, when, by virtue of an intimate recess, we can discover a certain duplicity of soul, and divide ourselves into two parties.'" He afterwards tells us, that, "according as this recess was deep and intimate, and the dual number practically formed in us, we were sup-

* Page 208, 5th Edit.
† See, in particular, Vol. I. p. 321, *et seq.* 6th Edit.

posed by the ancients to advance in morals and true wisdom."

By means of this fiction Mr. Smith has rendered his theory (contrary to what might have been expected from its first aspect) perfectly coincident in its practical tendency with that cardinal principle of the stoical philosophy which exhorts us to search for the rules of life, not *without* ourselves, but *within:* "Nec te quæsiveris extra." Indeed Butler himself has not asserted the authority and supremacy of conscience in stronger terms than Mr. Smith, who represents this as a manifest and unquestionable principle, whatever particular theory we may adopt concerning the origin of our moral ideas. It is only to be regretted, that, instead of the metaphorical expression of "*the man within the breast,* to whose opinions and feelings we find it of more consequence to conform our conduct than to those of the whole world," he had not made use of the simpler and more familiar words *reason* and *conscience.* This mode of speaking was indeed suggested to him, or rather obtruded on him by the theory of sympathy, and nothing can exceed the skill and the taste with which he has availed himself of its assistance in perfecting his system; but it has the effect, with many readers, of keeping out of view the real state of the question, and (like Plato's Commonwealth of the Soul, and Council of State) to encourage among inferior writers a figurative or allegorical style in treating of subjects which, more than any other, require all the simplicity, precision, and logical consistency of which language is susceptible.*

SECTION III.

Of the Sense of the Ridiculous.

ANOTHER auxiliary principle to the moral faculty yet remains to be considered,—*the sense of ridicule,* and the anxiety which all men feel to avoid whatever is likely

* See Note (C.) at the end of this volume.

to render them the objects of it. The subject is extremely curious and interesting; but the time I have bestowed on the former article obliges me to confine myself to a very short explanation of the meaning of the word, and of the relation which the principle denoted by it bears to our nobler motives of action.

The natural and proper object of ridicule is those smaller improprieties in character and manners which do not rouse our feelings of moral indignation, or impress us with a melancholy sense of human depravity. In the words of Aristotle the γελοῖον, or the ridiculous, may be defined to be αἰσχος ἀνώδυνον, the deformed without hurt or mischief, or (as he has explained his own meaning) "those smaller faults which are neither painful nor pernicious, but *unbeseeming;*" and "of which," he adds, "the proper correction is not *reproach*, but *laughter*."

In stating this as a general principle with respect to the ridiculous, I would not be understood to assert that every thing which is ridiculous implies *immorality* in the strict acceptation of that word. Ignorance, absurdity in reasoning, even a want of acquaintance with the established ceremonial of behaviour, often provoke our laughter with irresistible force. What is ridiculous, however, always implies some imperfection, and exposes the individual to whom it attaches to a species of contempt, of which (how good humored soever) no man would choose to be the object.

Perhaps, indeed, it might be found, on a more accurate analysis of this part of our constitution, that it is not, in such cases, merely the *intellectual* or *physical* defect which excites our ridicule, but the contrast between these and *some moral impropriety or imperfection*, which either conceals the defect from the individual himself, or induces him to attempt concealing it from others; and consequently that the sentiment of ridicule always involves, more or less, a sentiment of moral disapprobation. One thing is certain, that intellectual and physical imperfections never appear *so* ridiculous as when accompanied with affectation, hypocrisy, vanity, pride, or an obvious incongruity between the preten-

sions of an individual and the education he has received, or the station in which he was originally placed.

Upon this question, however, I shall not at present presume to decide. It is sufficient for my purpose, if it be granted that nothing is ridiculous but what falls short, some way or other, of our ideas of excellence; or, (as Cicero expresses it) "Locus et regio quasi ridiculi, turpitudine et deformitate quâdam continetur." *

Hence, I think, may be traced a beautiful *final cause* in this part of our frame. For while it enlarges the fund of our enjoyment, by rendering the more trifling imperfections of our fellow creatures a source of *amusement* to us,† it excites the exertions of every individual to correct those imperfections by which the ridicule of others is likely to be provoked. As our eagerness, too, to correct these imperfections may be presumed to be weak, in proportion as we apprehend them to be, *in a moral view*, of trifling moment; we are so formed, that the painful feelings produced by ridicule, are often more poignant than those arising from the consciousness of having rendered ourselves the objects of strong moral disapprobation. Even the consciousness of being *hated* by mankind is to the generality of men less intolerable than what the poet calls,

"The world's *dread laugh*,
Which scarce the firm Philosopher can scorn."

It furnishes no objection to these observations, that the sense of ridicule is not always favorable to virtuous conduct; and that it frequently tends very powerfully to mislead us from our duty. The same remark may be extended to *the desire of esteem*, and even to *the moral faculty*,—that they are liable to be perverted by education and fashion. But the great ends of our being are to be collected from the *general scope* of the principles of our constitution; not from the particular instances in which this scope is thwarted by adventitious circumstances; and nothing surely can be more evident than

* De Oratore, Lib. ii. cap. 58.

† Gresset has expressed the same idea with a humorous and happy extravagance:

"Les sots sont ici-bas pour nos menus plaisirs."

this, that the three principles just mentioned were all intended to cooperate together, and to lead to a conduct favorable to the improvement of the individual, and to the general interests of society.

The sense of ridicule, in particular, although it has a manifest reference to such a scene of imperfection as we are placed in at present, is, on the whole, a most important auxiliary to our sense of duty, and well deserves a careful examination in an analysis of the moral constitution of man. It is one of the most striking characteristics of the human constitution, as distinguished from that of the lower animals, and has an intimate connexion with the highest and noblest principles of our nature. As Milton has observed, "Smiles from *reason* flow, To brutes denied:" And it may be added, that they not only imply the power of *reason*, in the more limited acceptation of that word, as applicable to the perception of truth and falsehood; but the moral faculty, or that power by which we distinguish *right* from *wrong*. Indeed they imply the power of *reason* (in both acceptations of the term) in a high state of cultivation.

In the education of youth there is nothing which requires more serious attention than the proper regulation of the sense of ridicule; nor is there any instance in which the legislator has it more in his power to influence national manners, than by watching over those public exhibitions which avail themselves of this principle of human nature, as a vehicle of entertainment to the multitude.

SECTION IV.

Of Taste, considered in its relation to Morals.

FROM the explanation formerly given of the import of the phrases *Moral Beauty*, and *Moral Deformity*, it may be easily conceived in what manner the character and the conduct of our fellow creatures may become subservient to the gratification of Taste. The use which

the poet makes of this class of our intellectual pleasures is entirely analogous to the resources which he borrows from the charms of external nature. By skilful selections and combinations, characters more exalted and more pleasing may be drawn, than have ever fallen under our observation; and a series of events may be exhibited in perfect consonance to our moral feelings. Rewards and punishments may be distributed by the poet with an exact regard to the merits of individuals; and those irregularities in the distribution of happiness and misery, which furnish the subject of so many complaints in real life, may be corrected in the world created by his genius. Here, too, the poet borrows from nature the model after which he copies, not only as he accommodates his imaginary arrangements to his unperverted sense of justice, but as he accommodates them to the *general laws* by which the world is governed; for whatever exceptions may occur in particular cases, there can be no more doubt about the fact, that virtue is the direct road to happiness, and vice to misery, than that in the material world blemishes and defects are lost amid prevailing beauty and order.

The power of moral taste, like that which has for its object the beauty of material forms and the various productions of the fine arts, requires much exercise for its developement and culture. The one species of taste also, as well as the other, is susceptible of a false refinement, injurious to our own happiness, and to our usefulness as members of Society.

With this false refinement of taste is sometimes connected the peculiar species of misanthropy which is grafted on a worthy and benevolent heart. When the standard of moral excellence we have been accustomed to dwell upon in imagination is greatly elevated above the common attainments of humanity, we are apt to become too difficult and fastidious (if I may use the expression) in our *moral taste;* or, in plainer language, to become unreasonably censorious of the follies and vices of our contemporaries. In such cases, it may happen that the native benevolence of the mind, by being habitually directed towards ideal characters, may prove

a source of real dissatisfaction and dislike towards those with whom we associate. Such a disposition, when carried to an extreme, not only sours the temper, and dries up all the springs of innocent comfort which nature has so liberally provided for us in the common incidents of life, but, by withdrawing a man from active pursuits, renders all his talents and virtues useless to society. A character of this description has furnished to Molière the subject of the most finished of all his dramatic pieces; and to Marmontel, of one of his most agreeable and useful tales. The former of these is universally known as the master-piece of French comedy; but the latter possesses also an uncommon degree of merit by the hints it suggests for curing the weaknesses in which the character originates, and by the interesting contrast it exhibits between the *misanthrope* of Molière, and a man who unites inflexibility of principle with that accommodation of temper which is necessary for the practical exercise of virtue. The great nurse and cherisher of this species of misanthropy is solitary contemplation; and the only effectual remedy is society and business, together with a habit of directing the attention rather to the correction of our own faults than to a jealous and suspicious examination of the motives which influence the conduct of our neighbours.

Considered as a principle of action, a cultivated moral taste, while it provides an effectual security against the grossness necessarily connected with many vices, cherishes a temper of mind friendly to all that is amiable, or generous, or elevated in our nature. When separated, however, as it sometimes is, from a strong sense of duty, it can scarcely fail to prove a fallacious guide; the influence of fashion, and of other casual associations, tending perpetually to lead it astray. This is more particularly remarkable in men to whom the gratifications of *taste in general* form the principal object of pursuit, and whose habits of life encourage them to look no higher for their rule of conduct than the way of the world.

The language employed by some of the Greek philosophers in their speculations concerning the nature of

virtue seems, on a superficial view, to imply that they supposed the moral faculty to be wholly resolvable into a sense of the beautiful; and hence Lord Shaftesbury, Dr. Hutcheson, and others, have been led to adopt a phraseology which has the appearance of substituting taste in contradistinction to reason and conscience, as the ultimate standard of right and wrong.

While on this subject I cannot help taking notice of a highly exceptionable passage which occurs in one of Mr. Burke's later publications,—a passage, in which (after contrasting the polished and courtly manners of the higher orders with the coarseness and vulgarity of the multitude) he remarks, that "among the former, vice loses half its malignity by losing all its grossness." The fact, according to *my* view of things, is precisely the reverse; that the malignant contagiousness of vice is increased tenfold by every circumstance which draws a veil over, or disguises its native deformity. On this argument volumes might be written, and I sincerely wish that a hand could be found equal to the task. At present I must content myself with recommending it to the serious attention of moralists, as one of the most important topics of *practical ethics* which the actual circumstances of this part of the world point out as an object of philosophical discussion.

From each of the four principles which have now been under consideration unfortunate consequences result, wherever it prevails in the character, as the leading motive to action. Where they all maintain their due place, in subordination to the moral faculty, they tend at once to fortify virtuous habits, and to recommend them, by the influence of amiable example, to the imitation of others.

A partial consideration of the phenomena of moral perception, connected with one or other of these principles, has suggested some of the most popular theories concerning the origin of our moral ideas. An attention to the moral faculty alone, without regard to the principles which were intended to operate as its auxiliaries, and which contribute, in fact, so powerfully to the good

order of society, has led a few philosophers into an opposite extreme, less dangerous, undoubtedly, in its practical tendency, but less calculated perhaps to recommend ethical disquisitions to the notice of those who are engrossed with the active concerns of life.

All the foregoing inquiries concerning the moral constitution of man proceed on the supposition that he has a freedom of choice between good and evil; and that, when he deliberately performs an action which he knows to be wrong, he renders himself justly obnoxious to punishment. That this supposition is agreeable to the common apprehensions of mankind will not be disputed.

From very early times, indeed, the truth of the supposition has been called in question by a few speculative men, who have contended that the actions we perform are the necessary result of the constitutions of our minds operated on by the circumstances of our external situation, and that what we call moral delinquencies are as much a part of our destiny as the corporeal or intellectual qualities we have received from nature. The argument in support of this doctrine has been proposed in various forms, and has been frequently urged with the confidence of demonstration.

With the consideration of these metaphysical subtilties, it seems to me improper to interrupt at present the train of our ethical inquiries. And, although I do not by any means go so far as Lord Bolingbroke when he pronounces, that "no one can deny the free will of man *without lying*," * I trust that I may fairly assume in what follows, the fact of man's free agency as sufficiently established by the evidence of consciousness; referring those who wish to enter more deeply into the controversy to the Appendix at the end of this work.

* "The free will of man, which no one can deny without lying or denying his instinctive knowledge." *Bolingbroke's Philosophical Works*, Vol. V. p. 85. The same assertion in substance occurs in various other parts of his writings.

BOOK THIRD.

OF THE VARIOUS BRANCHES OF OUR DUTY.

THE different theories which have been proposed concerning the nature and essence of virtue have arisen chiefly from attempts to trace all the branches of our duty to *one* principle of action, such as a rational self-love, benevolence, justice, or a disposition to obey the will of God.

In order to avoid those partial views of the subject, which naturally take their rise from an undue love of system, the following inquiries proceed on an arrangement which has, in all ages, recommended itself to the good sense of mankind. This arrangement is founded on the different objects to which our duties relate. 1. The Deity. 2. Our Fellow Creatures. And 3. Ourselves.

CHAPTER FIRST.

OF THE DUTIES WHICH RESPECT THE DEITY.

As our duties to God (so far as they are discoverable by the light of nature) must be inferred from the relation in which we stand to him as the Author and the Governor of the universe, an examination of the principles of natural religion forms a necessary introduction to this section. Such an examination, besides, being the reasonable consequence of those impressions which his works produce on every attentive and well disposed mind, may be itself regarded both as one of the duties we owe to HIM, and as the expression of a moral temper sincerely devoted to truth, and alive to the sublimest emotions of gratitude and of benevolence.

PRELIMINARY INQUIRY INTO THE PRINCIPLES OF NATURAL RELIGION.

Of the Existence of the Deity.

IT is scarcely possible to conceive a man capable of reflection, who has not, at times, proposed to himself the following questions: Whence am I? and whence the innumerable tribes of plants and of animals which I see, in constant succession, rising into existence? Whence the beautiful fabric of this universe? and by what wise and powerful Being were the principles of my constitution so wonderfully adapted to the various objects around me? To whom am I indebted for the distinguished rank which I hold in the creation, and for the numberless blessings which have fallen to my lot? And what return shall I make for this profusion of goodness?—The only return I *can* make is by accommodating my conduct to the will of my Creator, and by fulfilling, as far as I am able, the purposes of my being. But how are these purposes to be be discovered? The analogy of the lower animals gives me here no information. They too, as well as I, are endowed with various instincts and appetites; but their nature, on the whole, exhibits a striking contrast to mine. They are impelled by a blind determination towards their proper objects, and seem to obey the law of their nature in yielding to every principle which excites them to action. In my own species alone the case is different. Every individual chooses for himself the ends of his pursuit, and chooses the means which he is to employ for attaining them. Are all these elections equally *good?* and is there no *law* prescribed to man? I feel the reverse. I am able to distinguish what is right from what is wrong; what is honorable and becoming from what is unworthy and base; what is laudable and meritorious from what is shameful and criminal. *Here*, then, are plain indications of the conduct I *ought* to pursue. There is a law prescribed to man as well as to the brutes. The only difference is, that it depends on my own will whether I obey or disobey it. And shall I alone counteract the

intentions of my maker, by abusing that freedom of choice which he has been pleased to bestow on me by raising me to the rank of a rational and moral being.

This is surely the language of *nature;* and which could not fail to occur to every man capable of serious thought, were not the understanding and the moral feelings in some instances miserably perverted by religious and political prejudices, and in others by the false refinements of metaphysical theories. How callous must be that heart which does not echo back the reflections which Milton puts into the mouth of our first parent!

> "Thou sun, said I, fair light,
> And thou enlightened earth, so fresh and gay,
> Ye hills and dales, ye rivers, woods, and plains,
> And ye, that live and move, fair creatures, tell,
> Tell, if you saw, how came I thus, how here;
> Not of myself; by some great Maker then,
> In goodness, as in power preeminent;
> Tell me how I may know him, how adore,
> From whom I have, that thus I move and live,
> And feel that I am happier than I know."

In this manner, a consideration of the relation in which we stand to God must satisfy us that it is *our duty*, or (to vary our language) that it is *morally right* we should obey *his* will, as manifested by that inward monitor, established by himself as his vicegerent in our breast. Our moral powers give rise to religious sentiments, and these become, in their turn, the most powerful inducements to the practice of morality.

In the course of our argument concerning the moral attributes of God we shall find reason to conclude that our hopes are not limited to this life, and that there is solid ground to expect a further interposition of Divine power for the reward of virtue and the punishment of vice,—a conclusion which will furnish another very powerful sanction to the laws of morality. I shall treat of the presumptions for a future state under the article of *Natural Religion*, because the moral attributes of the Deity furnish the strongest arguments in support of it. At the same time, the subjects are not necessarily connected. Even absolute atheism cannot destroy entirely

the anticipations which bad men have of future punishment, nor would they reason consequentially if it did; for the same blind necessity which brought them into this world may carry them into another. Whether it be owing to an overruling intelligence or not, it is a *fact* which nobody can deny, that there are general laws which regulate the course of human affairs, and that even here we see manifest indications of a connexion between virtue and happiness. Why may not *necessity* continue that existence it at first gave birth to; and why may not the connexion between virtue and happiness continue for ever?

Before entering on the following discussions, it is proper for me to take notice, in the first place, of the insuperable difficulties we may expect to encounter in the course of our inquiries; and, secondly, of the illegitimacy of any inference drawn from this consideration against the certainty of the truths which it is our leading aim to establish. Of the justness of both remarks, no illustration so striking can be produced as the difficulties we have already experienced in our researches concerning the powers of the human understanding; that part of the universe which of all others would seem to lie the most completely within the reach of our examination: and, accordingly, an argument has been drawn by Locke from this acknowledged ignorance of man concerning his own nature, to moderate the arrogance of his pretensions when he presumes to speculate concerning the attributes of God. "If you do not understand the operations of your own finite mind, that *thinking thing* within you, do not think it strange that you cannot comprehend the operations of that Eternal Infinite Mind who made and governs all things, and whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain." *

In proof of the existence of the Deity two modes of reasoning have been employed, which are commonly

* Locke's Essay, Book iv. Chap. 10, § 19. The same thought occurs in Pascal. "L'homme sait si peu ce que c'est que Dieu, qu'il ne sait pas ce qu'il est lui-même; mais autant l'essence d'un Dieu est incompréhensible pour moi, autant son existence m'est intimément évidente. La preuve en est en moi; et comme moi, tout homme porte cette preuve en lui-même."

distinguished by the titles of the arguments *a priori* and *a posteriori;* the former founded on certain metaphysical propositions which are assumed as axioms, the latter appealing to that systematic order, and those combinations of means to ends which are every where conspicuous in nature.

The argument *a priori* has been enforced with singular ingenuity by Dr. Clarke, whose particular manner of stating it is supposed to have been suggested to him by the following passage in Newton's *Principia.* "Æternus est et infinitus, omnipotens et omnisciens, id est, durat ab æterno in æternum, et adest ab infinito in infinitum: omnia regit, et omnia cognoscit quæ fiunt aut fieri possunt. Non est æternitas et infinitas, sed æternus et infinitus; non est duratio et spatium, sed durat et adest. Durat semper, et adest ubique, et existendo semper et ubique, durationem et spatium constituit. * * * Deum summum necessario existere in confesso est: et eâdem necessitate *semper* est et *ubique.*"

The substance of Clarke's argument is essentially the same, amounting to the following proposition, that "space and time are only abstract conceptions of an immensity and eternity which force themselves on our belief; and as immensity and eternity are not substances, they must be the attributes of a Being who is necessarily immense and eternal."

"These," says Dr. Reid, "are the speculations of men of superior genius; but whether they be as solid as they are sublime, or whether they be the wanderings of imagination in a region beyond the limits of human understanding, I am unable to determine." After this candid acknowledgment from Dr. Reid, I need not be ashamed to confess my own doubts and difficulties on the same subject.*

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* An argument, substantially the same with that of Newton, for the existence of God, is hinted at by Cudworth. *Intell. System,* Chap. v. Sect. 3, § 4. Also by Dr. Henry More, *Enchirid. Metaph.* Chap. viii. § 8. See Mosheim's Latin Translation of Cudworth, Tom. II. p. 356, Lug. Batav. 1773.

Dr. Price in the last edition of his Review of the Principal Questions and Difficulties in Morals, has attempted to illustrate and enforce Clarke's argument, by placing it in a light somewhat different from that in which it occured to the author; but he appears to me, by departing from the language of Clarke and Newton, to have involved their ideas in additional mystery. In the course of this reasoning he

But although the argument, as stated by Clarke, does not carry complete conviction to my mind, I think it must be acknowledged that there is something very peculiar and wonderful in those conceptions of immensity and eternity which force themselves on our belief Nay further, I think that these conceptions furnish important lights in the study of natural religion. For when once we have established the existence of an intelligent and powerful cause from the *works of creation*, we are unavoidably led to apply to him our conceptions of immensity and eternity, and to conceive him as filling the infinite extent of both with his presence and his power. Hence we associate with the idea of God those awful impressions which are naturally produced by the idea of infinite space, and perhaps still more by the idea of endless duration. Nor is this all. It is from our ideas of space and of time that the notion of infinity is originally derived, and it is thence that we transfer the expression by a sort of metaphor, to other subjects. When we speak, therefore, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, our notions, if not wholly borrowed from space and time, are at least wonderfully aided by this analogy; so that the conceptions of immensity and eternity, if they do not of themselves demonstrate the existence of God, yet necessarily enter into the ideas we form of his nature and attributes. It may be worth while to add, that the notion of *necessary existence* which we derive from the contemplation of space and of time render the same notion, when applied to the Supreme Being,

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observes, that "God is wisdom rather than wise, and reason rather than reasonable.' "In like manner," he continues, "he is eternity rather than eternal, immensity rather than immense, and power rather than powerful." (*Review*, &c. &c. p. 500, 3d Edit.) The excellent and learned writer seems to have considered this thought as entirely new; but it is to be found in Hobbes's Answer to Bishop Bramhall, where it is quoted from the writings of that prelate. I presume (for I have never seen the bishop's works), that it is faithfully copied from some one of his publications. "Upon this silly conceit, he (Tho. Hobbes) charges me for saying that God is not just but justice itself, not eternal but eternity itself, which he calleth unseemly words to be said of God...I wish he had considered better with himself before he had desperately cast himself upon these rocks."—(*Hobbes's Works*, p. 428, Fol. Edit.)

On this point I cannot help agreeing with Hobbes, that, "though all men in the world understand that *the eternal* is God, yet no man can understand that *the eternity* is God, any more than that a wise man and his wisdom are the same; or that any attribute in the abstract is the same with the substance to which it is attributed." —(*Hobbes's Works*, p. 429.)

much more easy to be apprehended than it would otherwise be.

Important use may also be made of these conceptions of immensity and eternity in stating the argument for the future existence of the soul. For why was the mind of man rendered capable of extending its views in point of time beyond the limits of human transactions, and in point of space, beyond the limits of the visible universe, if all our prospects are to terminate here?—or why was a glimpse of so magnificent a scene disclosed to a being, the period of whose animal existence bears so small a proportion to the vastness of his desires? Surely this conception of the necessary existence of space and time, of immensity and eternity, was not forced continually upon the thoughts of man for no purpose whatever. And to what purpose can we suppose it to be subservient, but to remind those who make a proper use of their reason, of the trifling value of some of those objects we at present pursue, when compared with the scenes on which we may afterwards enter; and to animate us in the pursuit of wisdom and virtue, by affording us the prospect of an *indefinite* progression? *

After what I have already said of the argument *a priori*, it will not be expected that I should enter here into a particular illustration of it. Such as wish to examine it with attention may consult Dr. Clarke's work on the Being and Attributes of God; the last edition of Dr. Price's Review of the Principal Questions and Difficulties in Morals; and a book published by Dr. Hamilton, late Bishop of Ossory,† where, after an historical review of the different forms in which the argument *a*

* Cicero had plainly the same argument in view when he remarked, "*Nescio quomodo inhæret in mentibus quasi sæculorum quoddam augurium futurorum; idque in maximis ingeniis altissimisque animis et exsistit maximè, et apparet facillimè.*"—*Tuscul. Disput.* Lib. i. c. 15.

† In the *Bibliotheca Britannica*, published by the late Dr. Watt of Glasgow, I find this work ascribed to Hugh Hamilton, author of a Treatise of Conic Sections,* which appeared at Dublin in 1758, and which I remember to have admired many years ago for its originality and elegance. If Dr. Watt's information (which is not always to be implicitly relied upon) be in this instance correct, I cannot help saying that, in my opinion, Mr. Hamilton's genius appears to much greater advantage as a geometrician than as a philosopher.

* "De Sectionibus Conicis. Tractatus Geometricus. In quo, ex Naturâ ipsius Coni, Sectionum Affectiones facillimè deducuntur." *Methodo Nova.* Dublinii, 1758.

priori has been stated by preceding writers, he proposes a new one of his own, more clear, (according to him) and more conclusive.

But whatever opinion be formed upon the argument *a priori*, all parties must allow that the argument *a posteriori* is more level to the comprehension of ordinary men, and more satisfactory to the philosopher himself. Indeed, in inquiries of this sort the presumption is strongly in favor of that mode of reasoning which is the most simple and obvious.

The existence of a Deity, however, does not seem to be an intuitive truth. It requires the exercise of our reasoning powers to present it in its full force to the mind. But the process of reasoning consists only of a single step, and the premises belong to that class of first principles which form an essential part of the human constitution. These premises are *two* in number. The one is, that every thing which begins to exist must have a cause. The other, that a combination of means conspiring to a particular end implies intelligence.

CHAPTER SECOND.

PRELIMINARY INQUIRY INTO THE PRINCIPLES OF NATURAL RELIGION.

SECTION I.

Of the Foundations of our Reasoning from the Effect to the Cause, and of the Evidences of Active Power exhibited in the Universe.

It was before observed that our knowledge of the course of nature is entirely the result of observation and experiment, and that there is no instance in which we perceive such a connexion between two successive events as might enable us to infer the one from the other as a necessary consequence.

From experience, indeed, we learn that there are many events so conjoined that the one constantly follows the other. It is possible, however, that this connexion, though a constant one as far as our observation has reached, is not a *necessary* connexion; nay, it is possible, for any thing we know to the contrary, that there may be no necessary connexions among any of the phenomena we see; and if there are any such connexions existing, we may rest assured that we shall never be able to discover them.

With this principle, when stated in general terms, most people I apprehend will now agree. Nor is the principle a new one, (as has been commonly supposed) and peculiar to Mr. Hume's system. Of this assertion I have produced sufficient proof in a note at the end of the first volume of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, where I have quoted various passages from Hobbes, Barrow, Butler, Berkeley, and others, demonstrating clearly that their notions on the subject were precisely the same with Mr. Hume's.* To the list of names there mentioned, perhaps that of Socrates ought to be added, who, as Xenophon tells us in the Memorabilia, blamed

* For some curious passages to the same purpose, see Philosophy of the Human Mind, vol. ii. Note (O.)

the sophists for inquiring *τίσιν ἀνάγκαις ἕκαστα γίγνεται τῶν οὐρανίων.* And he adds, *Ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς φροντίζοντας τὰ τοιαῦτα μωραίνοντας ἀπεδείκνυεν.* Afterwards he says, *Ἐθαύμαζε δὲ, εἰ μὴ φανερὸν αὐτοῖς ἐστιν, ὅτι ταῦτα οὐ δυνατόν ἐστιν ἀνθρώποις εὑρεῖν.**

From this view of the subject, with regard to cause and effect in physics, Mr. Hume has deduced an objection to the argument *a posteriori* for the existence of the Deity. After having proved that we cannot get the idea of necessary connexion from examining the conjunction between any two events, he takes for granted that we have no other idea of cause and effect than of two successive events which are always conjoined; that we have therefore no reason to think that any one event in nature is *necessarily* connected with another, or to infer the operation of power from the changes we observe in the universe.

In consequence of these alarming inferences, a number of Mr. Hume's opponents have been led to call in question the truth of his general principles with respect to the relation of cause and effect in natural philosophy. But it has always appeared to me that the defect of this part of Mr. Hume's system does not lie in his premises, but in the conclusion which he has deduced from them; and which, I flatter myself, I shall be able to show cannot be inferred from these premises by a legitimate process of reasoning.

Of the objections that have been stated to Mr. Hume's premises some are extremely frivolous. Dr. Beattie has opposed them by some instances. "There are now," says he, "in my view two contiguous houses, one of which was built last summer, and the other two years ago. By seeing them constantly together for several months, I find that the idea of the one determines my mind to form the idea of the other; so that, according to Mr. Hume's definition, the one house is the cause, and the other the effect." † But Dr. Beattie has overlooked one circumstance mentioned by Mr. Hume. That author had evidently in his view not coexistent objects,

* Lib. prim. Cap. I. 11. 18.
† Essay on Truth. Second Edit. p. 382.

but events succeeding each other in the order of time, for he always ascribes priority to the cause.

The same remark may be made on another instance which Dr. Beattie mentions. "Day and night," says he, "have always been contiguous and successive,—the imagination naturally runs from the idea of the one to that of the other; consequently, according to Mr. Hume's theory, either day is the cause of night, or night the cause of day, just as we consider the one or the other to have been originally prior in time; and its being the one or the other, depends entirely on my imagination." * Now it is evident that this conclusion can never be formed according to Mr. Hume's theory, for he tells us that when two events are conjoined we affix the idea of causation to that event which happens first in the order of time. But day and night happening alternately, the one cannot be considered as prior to the other, and therefore it is quite impossible that the idea of causation can be affixed to either.

But taking for granted the truth of Mr. Hume's premises, let us consider the accuracy of his subsequent reasoning.

In order to form a competent judgment on this point, it is necessary to recollect, that, according to his system, "all our ideas are nothing but copies of our impressions; or, in other words, that it is *impossible* for us to *think* of any thing which we have not antecedently *felt*, either by our external or internal senses." Having proved, therefore, that external objects, as they appear to our senses, give us no idea of power or of necessary connexion, and also that this idea cannot be copied from any internal impression, (that is, cannot be derived from reflection on the operations of our own minds) he thinks himself warranted to conclude that we have no such idea. "One event," says he, "follows another, but we never observe any tie between them. They seem *conjoined* but never *connected*. And as we can have no idea of any thing which never appeared to our outward sense or inward sentiment, the necessary con-

* Essay on Truth. Second Edit. pp. 332, 333.

clusion seems to be, that we have no idea of connexion or power at all, and that these words are absolutely without any meaning when employed either in philosophical reasonings or common life."

Are we therefore to reject, as perfectly unintelligible, a word which is to be found in all languages, because it expresses an idea, for the origin of which we cannot account upon a particular philosophical system? Would it not be more reasonable to suspect that the system was not perfectly complete, than that all mankind should have agreed in employing a word which conveys no meaning?

With respect to Mr. Hume's theory concerning the origin of our ideas, it is the less necessary to enter into particular discussions, as it coincides in the main with the doctrine of Locke, to which I have elsewhere stated some objections, which appear to me insurmountable.* Upon neither theory is it possible to explain the origin of those simple notions, which are not received immediately by any external sense, or derived from our own consciousness, but which are necessarily formed by the mind while we are exercising our intellectual powers upon their proper objects.

These very slight hints are sufficient to show that we are not entitled to dispute the reality of our idea of power, because we cannot trace it to any of the senses. The only question is, if it be certain, that we annex any idea to the word *power* different from that of constant succession? The following considerations among many others, prove that the import of these two expressions is by no means the same.

First, then, it is evident, that, if we had no idea of cause and effect different from that of mere succession, it would appear to us *as* absurd to suppose two events disjoined which we have constantly seen connected, as to suppose a change in external objects to take place without a cause. The fact, however, is, that nobody finds it difficult to conceive that two events which are constantly conjoined *may not* be necessarily connected;

* Philosophy of the Human Mind, vol. i. p. 94, *et seq.* Sixth Edit.

whereas it may be safely pronounced to be impossible for a person to bring himself for a moment to believe that any change may take place in the material universe without a cause. I can conceive very easily that the volition in my mind is not the efficient cause of the motions of my hand; but can I conceive that my hand moves without any cause whatever? Nay, I can conceive that no one event in nature is necessarily connected with any other event; but does it therefore follow that I can conceive these events to happen without the operation of a cause? Leibnitz maintained that the volitions of the mind were not the efficient causes of the motions of the body; and compared the connexion between them to that between two clocks so adjusted by an artist that the motions of the one shall always correspond with those of the other. Every person of reflection must acknowledge that, however unwarranted by facts this theory may be, it is still possible it may be true. But if Leibnitz had affirmed not only that there was no connexion between the two clocks, but that the motions in each went on without any cause whatever, his theory would have been not only unsupported by proof, but absurd and inconceivable.

In the second place, our experience of the established connexions of physical events is evidently too limited a foundation for our belief that every change must have a cause. Mr. Hume himself, in laying down "the rules by which to judge of causes and effects," observes, in the *first place*, that "cause and effect must be contiguous in space and time;" and consequently he apprehended that, according to the general opinion, matter produces its effects by impulse alone.* If, therefore, every change which had fallen under our notice had been preceded by apparent impulse, experience might have led us to conclude, from observing a change, that a previous impulse had been given; or, according to Mr. Hume's notion of *a cause*, that a cause had operated to produce this effect. Of the changes, however, which we see, how small a number is preceded by apparent impulse! And yet, in the case of every change

* Treatise of Human Nature, Vol. I. p. 304. See also p. 186.

around us, without exception, we have an irresistible conviction of the operation of some cause. I believe it will be difficult to explain, upon Mr. Hume's principles, how we get this idea of the necessity of a cause in the case of those phenomena in which impulse has apparently no share.

To this we may add, that children at a very early period of life, when their experience is extremely limited, discover an eager curiosity to pry into the causes of the phenomena they observe. Even the attention of the lower animals seems to be roused when they see a body begin to move, or in general any change begin to take place in external objects.

The arguments which are commonly used to prove the necessity of human actions derive all their plausibility from the general maxim, that every change requires a cause with which it is *necessarily connected.* It is remarkable that this doctrine of the necessity of the will should form part of the same system with the theory of cause and effect which I have now been examining.*

The question, however, still recurs, in what manner do we acquire the idea of causation, power, or efficiency? But this question, if the foregoing observations be admitted, is comparatively of little consequence, as the doubts which may arise on the subject tend only (without affecting the reality of the idea or notion) to expose the defects of particular philosophical systems.

The most probable account of the matter seems to be that the idea of causation or of power necessarily

* The same argument for the necessity of the will has been very recently repeated with much confidence by the Comte de la Place in his Essai Philosophique sur les Probabilités. "Les événemens actuels ont avec les précédens une liaison fondée sur le principe évidente, qu'une chose ne peut pas commencer d'être, sans une cause qui la produise. Cet axiome, connu sous le nom de *principe de la raison suffisante*, s'étend aux actions même que l'on juge indifférentes. La volonté la plus libre ne peut, sans un motif déterminant, leur donner naissance; car si toutes les circonstances de deux positions étant exactement semblables, elle agissoit dans l'une et s'abstenoit d'agir dans l'autre, son choix seroit un *effet sans cause;* * elle seroit alors, dit Leibnitz, le hazard aveugle des Epicuréens."

* [illegible]guage was long ago pointed out by Mr. Hume. "They are still more [illegible] effect must have a cause, because it is implied in the very idea of [illegible] presupposes a cause, effect being a relative term, of which cause is [illegible] of the question is, whether every object which begins to exist must [illegible] *Treatise of Human Nature*, Vol. I. p. 47.

accompanies the perception of change in a way somewhat analogous to that in which sensation implies a being who feels, and thought a being who thinks. Is it possible to conceive a person (however limited his experience may be) whose curiosity would not be roused by a *change* taking place in the objects around him? and what is this curiosity but an anxiety to know the *cause* of the *effect*? The mere perception of *change*, therefore, in the material universe, seems sufficient to introduce to the mind the ideas of *cause* and *effect*, and to impress us with a belief that this change *could not* have taken place unless there had been some *cause* for it. Such, I apprehend, would be the conclusion of a man wholly destitute of experience, and who was even ignorant of his own power to move at will the members of his body.

It must indeed be acknowledged, that, after having had experience of our own *power*, we come to associate the idea of *force*, or of an animal *nisus*, with that of *cause*; and hence some have been led to suppose that our only idea of *cause* is derived from our bodily exertions. Hence, too, it is that in natural philosophy our language frequently bears a reference to our own sensations. The ideas of *cause*, however, and of *power*, are more general than that of *force*, and might have been acquired although we had never been conscious of any bodily exertion whatever. There is surely no impropriety in saying that the mind has *power* over the train of its ideas, and over its various faculties, as well as over the members of the body.

These observations coincide with the opinion of Dr. Reid, who long ago remarked, that, by the constitution of the mind, a beginning of existence, or any change in nature, suggests to us the notion of a cause, and compels our belief of its existence.

Dr. Price also, in treating of the origin of our ideas,* has anticipated me in part of the foregoing doctrine. "What we observe," says he, "by our external senses is properly no more than that one thing *follows* another,

* See his Review of the Principal Questions in Morals.

or the *constant conjunction* of certain events. That one thing is the *cause* of another, or *produces* it by its efficacy and operation, we never see. Our certainty that every new event requires some cause depends not at all on experience, no more than our certainty of any other the most obvious subject of intuition. In the idea of every change is included that of its being an *effect*." *

Upon† this part of the subject, indeed, I write with a good deal of diffidence, because the opinion which I have now stated differs considerably from that of some very ingenious and candid persons with whom I have conversed; who think not only that it is from our own voluntary exertions that our *first* ideas of cause and power are derived, but that we have no idea whatever of these which is not borrowed by analogy from our own consciousness.

One of my friends has amused himself with conceiving in what manner a man, who had never had experience of any animal exertion, would reason concerning the phenomena of the material world, and has been led to apprehend that he would consider the different events he saw merely as *antecedents* and *consequents*, without applying to the former in any instance the idea of *causation*.‡

I have already hinted that my own opinion is different from this; but I perfectly agree with my friend in thinking that this conclusion does not lead the way to any sceptical consequences. To say that our ideas of power and cause are derived from our own voluntary exertions does not affect the reality of these ideas. And although we should grant that a man, who had never

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* I do not know how to reconcile this passage from Price with another which follows a few pages after. "While we only see one thing constantly following another, without perceiving the real dependence and connexion, we are necessarily dissatisfied, and feel a state of mind very different from that entire acquiescence which we experience upon considering Sir Isaac Newton's laws of motion, or any other instances and facts in which we see the necessary connexion and truth."

† This paragraph, and some of the following pages, are copied verbatim from an Essay on the Idea of Cause and Effect, and on the object of Natural Philosophy, which the author read before the Royal Society of Edinburgh in the year 1784. The original copy, in the hand writing of a friend still alive, is at present in my possession. Various other paragraphs in this section are transcribed with some slight alterations from the same manuscript.—See *Trans. Roy. Soc. Edin.* Vol. I. p. 21.

‡ I alluded here to my late excellent and illustrious friend Mr. Playfair.

been conscious of any voluntary exertion, could never be led to conceive these ideas, or to comprehend the argument for the existence of a Deity, still that argument would apply *universally* to our species, for without such a consciousness no individual ever did, or could exist. Whatever ideas, whatever principles we are necessarily led to acquire by the circumstances in which we are placed, and by the exercise of those faculties which are essential to our preservation, are to be considered as parts of human nature, no less than those which are implanted in the mind at its first formation.

I am aware that this will not be considered by some as a complete answer to the objection; and it will still be urged that, if our only ideas of cause and power be derived from our own voluntary exertions, the argument for the existence of a Deity rests merely on an arbitrary association of ideas. We have found from experience that our voluntary exertions are followed by certain changes in the state of external objects, and are accordingly led to suppose, when we see other changes take place, that they have been preceded by some voluntary exertions analogous to those of which we are conscious. I cannot, however, help being of opinion, that the principle which leads us to consider a cause as necessary to produce a *change* in material things is of a kind very different from the association of ideas. The changes which we and the whole human race are able to produce in the state of terrestrial objects are nothing, either in point of number or magnitude, in comparison of those which we see going on both in the earth and heavens, and I may add in our own bodies, and over which we have no influence. Whence is it then that we connect with *every* change we see the idea of a cause? From the similarity between our own appearance and that of other men, and from the striking analogy between the human race and other animals, I shall admit that the association of ideas alone might lead us to connect the idea of voluntary exertion with animal motion. But whence is it that we associate the idea of a cause with the fall of a stone, with the ebbing and flowing of the sea, or with the motion of the plan-

ets? It will be said that, having learned from our own consciousness and experience the connexion between voluntary exertion and motion, we have recourse to the supposition of some analogous power or force to *account* for every motion we see. But what is it that leads us to think of *accounting* for these motions? Nothing, I apprehend, but that law of our nature which leads us to infer the existence of a cause wherever a change is perceived.

Some authors have compared this law of our nature to our instinctive interpretation of natural signs.* As we *perceive* the passions and emotions in the minds of others by means of their looks and gestures, so it has been apprehended that every change we observe is accompanied with a perception of *power* or *cause*. This comparison will not be the less just, although we should proceed on the supposition that our first ideas of power and cause are derived from our own voluntary exertions; for the case is perfectly analogous with respect to the natural expressions of passion and emotion. No modification of countenance could convey the idea of *rage* to a man who had never been conscious of that passion; but after having acquired the idea of this passion from his own consciousness, he is able instinctively to interpret its natural expression.

Although, however, there may be some foundation for the foregoing comparison, it is necessary to remark, that our association of the ideas of *change* and *cause* is of a much more intimate and indissoluble nature than our association of any natural sign with the idea signified. Every person must perceive, upon the slightest reflection, that the connexion between any sign and the thing signified *may be* merely an arbitrary connexion adapted to our particular constitution. Even in the case of hardness we can discover no connexion whatever between the external quality and the sensation which suggests it. But, in the case of every change in the state of external objects, or of our own bodies, we not only connect with this particular change the idea of some cause, but we

* Reid's Enquiry, Third Ed. pp. 88, 89.

have an irresistible conviction of the *necessity* of a cause. Something not unlike to this takes place with respect to our ideas of space and time. We acquire both originally from our perceptions; but having once acquired them, we have an irresistible conviction that both space and time are necessary and self-existent.

Having endeavoured to vindicate against the objections of Mr. Hume the reality of our notion of power or efficiency, I proceed to examine more particularly the foundation of our belief, that every thing that begins to exist must have a cause. Is this belief founded on abstract reasoning, or is it the result of experience, or is it an intuitive judgment? A variety of attempts have been made to demonstrate the truth of this principle from some general metaphysical axioms; in particular by Hobbes, Clarke, and Locke. Mr. Hume, in his Treatise of Human Nature, has examined each of their demonstrations, and has shown very clearly that they all take for granted the thing to be proved.

Other philosophers have thought that the principle may be proved by induction, from the particular instances that have fallen under our experience, as we infer from particular facts that cold freezes water, that heat turns it into steam, and that all bodies gravitate to each other.

But this opinion will not bear examination; for the thing to be proved is not a contingent but a necessary truth. It is not that "things which begin to exist commonly have a cause; nor even that they have always been found to have a cause as far as our experience has reached,—but that they *must* have a cause, and that the contrary supposition implies an impossibility." * Now

* The very acute and ingenious Dr. Campbell, although he plainly leaned to the supposition that our idea of causation is drawn from experience, acknowledges, nevertheless, that it *seems* to involve the idea of *necessary* connexion. "In the proposition whatever hath a beginning hath a cause, we intuitively conclude from the existence of one thing the existence of another. This proposition, however, so far differs, in my apprehension, from others of the same order, that I cannot avoid considering the opposite assertion as not only false, but contradictory; *but I do not pretend to explain the ground of this difference.*"—(*Phil. of Rhet.* Vol. I. pp. 114, 115.) From the last clause it may be inferred, that Dr. Campbell thought something was still wanting for the complete elucidation of this subject.

Even some of the philosophers who most confidently reject the application of the word *necessary* to this proposition admit that it involves the idea of *invariable* con-

it is manifest that no induction, how extensive soever, can ever lead to the discovery of a necessary truth; for experience only informs us of what is, or what has been, not of what must necessarily be; and the evidence of the conclusion must be of the same nature with that of the premises.

But abstracting from this consideration, and viewing this principle merely as a contingent truth, how is it possible to account, by means of experience, for our belief, that every change in the state of the universe is actually produced by a cause? In every case in which experience informs us that two things are connected, both of them must have fallen under our observation. But the causes of by far the greater number of phenomena we see are perfectly unknown to us, and therefore we never could learn from experience whether they have causes or not. The only instance in which we have any immediate knowledge of an efficient cause is in the consciousness we have of our own voluntary actions, and surely this experience is not sufficient to account for the confidence with which we form the general conclusion.

From the foregoing observations we may infer that this principle is not founded on experience; and it has been shown clearly by Mr. Hume that it is not demonstrable by abstract reasoning,—we must therefore conclude that it is either a prejudice or an intuitive judgment.

That it is not a prejudice may be safely inferred from the universal consent of mankind, both learned and unlearned. Mr. Hume was the first person who called it in question, and even he frequently relapses unawares into the common conviction. Thus in his Treatise of Human Nature: "As to those impressions which arise from the senses, their *ultimate cause* is, in my opinion, perfectly inexplicable by human reason; and it will always be

nexion. I should be glad to be informed what distinction they make between the words *invariable* and *necessary*. What idea do we annex to the phrase *necessary conjunction*, but a conjunction which *cannot* be varied? Experience (it is plain) can only inform us that a conjunction has been found *unvaried* as far as it has been hitherto observed, but how do we infer from this that it is an *invariable* conjunction?

impossible to decide with certainty whether they arise immediately from the object, or are produced by the creative power of the mind, or are derived from the author of our being."

Upon a review of the observations and reasonings already stated in the course of this inquiry, it can scarcely fail to occur to an attentive reader that the word *cause* is used both by philosophers and the vulgar in two senses, which are widely different. When it is said that every change in nature indicates the operation of a cause, the word *cause* expresses something which is supposed to be necessarily connected with the change, and without which it could not have happened. This may be called the *metaphysical* meaning of the word, and such causes may be called *metaphysical* or *efficient causes.*

In natural philosophy, however, when we speak of one thing being the cause of another, all that we mean is, that the two are constantly conjoined, so that when we see the one we may expect the other. These conjunctions we learn from experience alone, and without an acquaintance with them we could not accommodate our conduct to the established course of nature. The causes which are the objects of our investigation in natural philosophy may, for the sake of distinction, be called *physical causes.**

In the Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind † I have endeavoured to trace the origin of those prejudices which have led philosophers, in every age, to confound together efficient and physical causes; and I have remarked the extensive influence which this inaccurate employment of terms has had on their physical systems. The ancients, in particular, seem universally to have ascribed a real efficiency to physical causes;

* In a respectable publication, entitled Introduction to an Analysis of the Principles of Natural Philosophy, by Dr. Matthew Young of Dublin, (Robinsons, London, 1800,) I find the following sentence, the meaning of which I am quite unable to conjecture.

"Causes are either experimental or rational; experiment is the only standard of experimental causes; perception of the necessary connexion of events is the standard of rational causes." In illustration of this distinction he refers to an Essay by R. Young on the Mechanism of Nature.

† Vol. I. Chap. i. Sec. 2.

and the same supposition is implied in those expressions, so frequently in use among the moderns, of "a chain of causes and effects, or of necessary connexions existing among physical events." * Mr. Hume had, I think, great merit in showing that the province of the natural philosopher is not to trace necessary connexions, but constant conjunctions; or, in other words, to trace the general laws which regulate the order of the universe. But in stating this doctrine he unfortunately went into the opposite extreme; and as the ancients had vitiated natural philosophy by busying themselves about efficient causes, so Mr. Hume's argument tends, though perhaps unintentionally on his part, to subvert the foundations of natural religion, by affirming that physical causes are the only ones we know, and that the words *power*, *efficiency*, and *necessary connexion*, convey no meaning.

If this important distinction between efficient and physical causes be kept steadily in view, Mr. Hume's doctrine concerning the relation of cause and effect in physics, so far from leading to atheism, is more favorable to religious belief than the common inaccurate conceptions entertained on that subject; as it keeps the Deity always in view, not only as the first, but as the constantly operating efficient cause in the material world, (either immediately, or by means of some intelligent instruments,) and as the great connecting principle amongst all the various phenomena which we observe.†

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* Even in the present times some of the most sagacious of Bacon's followers show a disposition to relapse into the figurative language of the multitude. "The chain of Natural Causes," says Dr. Reid, "has, not unfitly, been compared to a chain hanging down from Heaven; a link that is discovered supports the links below it, but it must itself be supported; and that which supports it must be supported, until we come to the first link, which is supported by the Throne of the Almighty."—(*Essays on the Intellectual Powers*, 4to. Ed. p. 115.) It is difficult to reconcile the approbation here bestowed on the above similitude, with the excellent and profound remarks on the relation of Cause and Effect, which occur in other parts of Dr. Reid's Works. See Essays on the Active Powers, p. 44, and pp. 286, 287, 288. For additional remarks on the same subject, see Philosophy of the Human Mind, Vol. II. Note (N.)

† This was in fact the very conclusion which Malebranche drew from premises strikingly similar to those of Mr. Hume. The great error of Malebranche in this inquiry was his extending his theory of *Occasional Causes* from the material to the moral world. For some remarks upon the important consequences which follow from this error, see First Dissertation prefixed to the Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica, Part ii. p. 170.

As to Mr. Hume's metaphysical subtilties on the idea of causation, it seems to me perfectly unnecessary to enlarge further on the argument, after the solution which he has himself suggested of the doubts and difficulties which have been now under our consideration. This solution, which is in my opinion eminently philosophical and beautiful, and which is more satisfactory to my mind than any thing advanced by his adversaries in opposition to his reasonings, I shall transcribe in Mr. Hume's own words.

"Here then is a kind of preestablished harmony between the course of nature and the succession of our ideas; and though the *powers and forces* by which the former is governed be wholly unknown to us, yet our thoughts and conceptions have still, we find, gone on in the same train with the other works of nature. Custom is that principle by which this correspondence has been effected; so necessary to the subsistence of our species, and the regulation of our conduct in every circumstance and occurrence of human life. Had not the presence of an object instantly excited the idea of those objects commonly conjoined with it, all our knowledge must have been limited to the narrow sphere of our memory and senses; and we should never have been able to adjust means to ends, or employ our natural powers, either to the producing of good or avoiding evil. Those who delight in the discovery and contemplation of final causes have here ample subject to employ their wonder and admiration.

"I shall add, for a further confirmation of the foregoing theory, that as this operation of the mind by which we infer like effects from like causes, and *vice versa*, is so essential to the existence of all human creatures, it is not probable that it could be trusted to the fallacious deductions of our reason, which is slow in its operations; appears not in any degree during the first years of infancy; and at best is, in every age and period of human life, extremely liable to error and mistake. It is more conformable to the ORDINARY WISDOM OF NATURE to secure so necessary an act of the mind by some instinct or mechanical tendency, which may be infallible

in its operations; may discover itself at the first appearance of life and thought; and may be independent of all the labored deductions of the understanding. As nature has taught us the use of our limbs, without giving us the knowledge of the muscles and nerves by which they are actuated, so has she implanted in us an instinct which carries forward the thoughts in a correspondent course to that which she has established among external objects, though we are ignorant of those *powers* and *forces* on which this regular course and succession of objects totally depends." *

I had just observed, before I introduced the foregoing quotation, that if the distinction between *efficient* and *physical causes* be admitted, Mr. Hume's doctrine with respect to the relation between cause and effect in natural philosophy is more favorable to theism than the common inaccurate conceptions which are entertained concerning that relation, as it keeps the Deity always in view as the constantly operating efficient cause in the material world, and as the great connecting principle among all its various phenomena.†

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* See in the last edition of Mr. Hume's *Philosophical Essays*, published during his own lifetime, the two sections entitled *Sceptical Doubts Concerning the Operations of the Understanding*, and *Sceptical Solution of these Doubts*.

† As a proof of the confusion we are liable to run into in our speculations about *causes*, without a due attention to the ambiguity of the word *cause*, I shall transcribe a few sentences from Mr. Burke's Inquiry into the *Sublime and Beautiful*; in which he has explicitly assigned to the phrase *efficient cause* the same meaning I annex to the phrase *physical cause*. In consequence of this, he has been led to represent it as the business of natural philosophy to investigate *efficient causes*, while, at the same time, he acknowledges that *ultimate causes* are placed beyond the reach of our faculties.

"When I say I intend to inquire into the *efficient cause* of sublimity and beauty, I would not be understood to say that I can come to the *ultimate cause*.....That great chain of causes which links one to another, even to the throne of God himself, can never be unravelled by any industry of ours. When we go but one step beyond the immediately sensible qualities of things we go out of our depth. All we do after is but a faint struggle, that shows we are in an element which does not belong to us. So that when I speak of cause, and efficient cause, I only mean certain affections of the mind that cause certain changes in the body; or certain powers and properties in bodies that *work* a change in the mind. As if I were to explain the motion of a body falling to the ground, I would say it was caused by gravity, and I would endeavour to show after what manner this power operated, without attempting to show *why* it operated in this manner; or if I were to explain the effects of bodies striking one another by the common laws of percussion, I should not endeavour to explain *how* motion itself is communicated."

Is it not a more simple and distinct phraseology to give to those causes which the natural philosopher investigates the name of *Physical*, and to apply the epithet *Efficient* (agreeably to its literal import) to what Burke calls *ultimate causes*?

When I first proposed (more than forty years ago) this phraseology to the late Dr. Reid, he objected to it that Newton, to whose language he was superstitiously

But perhaps it may be thought by some that this very conclusion is a sufficient refutation of the supposition from which it is inferred; for how is it possible to conceive that all the events which are constantly taking place in the different parts of the material universe are the immediate effects of the Divine agency?

For my own part, I have no scruple to admit this conclusion in all its extent; for I cannot perceive any absurdity that it involves; and I am happy to find that it is agreeable to the sentiments of some of our best and soundest philosophers. "All things," says Dr. Clarke, "that are done in the world are done either immediately by God himself, or by created intelligent beings. Matter being evidently not capable of any laws or powers whatsoever, any more than it is capable of intelligence, excepting only this *one* negative power, that every part of it will always and *necessarily* continue in that state, whether of rest or motion, wherein it at present is. So that all those things which we commonly say are the effects of the natural powers of matter and laws of motion, of gravitation, attraction, or the like, are indeed (if we will speak strictly and properly) the effects of God's acting upon matter *continually and every moment*, either immediately by himself, or mediately by some created intelligent being. Consequently there is no such thing as what we commonly call the course of nature or the power of nature. The course of nature, truly and properly speaking, is nothing else but the will of God producing certain effects in a continued, regular, constant, and uniform manner; which course or manner of acting, being in every moment perfectly arbitrary, is as easy to be altered at any time as to be preserved." *

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attached, had used the phrases *physical causes* and *efficient causes* as synonymous. If this be the fact, I have no scruple to say, that Newton has been guilty of indefinite and ambiguous expression; and that the observation only furnishes an additional argument in favor of those distinctive epithets I wish to introduce. Had my excellent friend adopted my suggestion, I cannot help thinking that he would have reconciled some apparent inconsistencies which occur in his later publications, and obviated some of the cavils with which he has been assailed by his not always candid opponents.

For various other observations which appear to myself not unimportant on the subject of this section, I beg leave to refer to the Second Volume of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, Chap. iv. Section 1.

* In speaking of the theory of occasional causes, Mr. Hume has committed an

Although, however, my opinion on this subject perfectly coincides with that of Dr. Clarke, I must own that it has not hitherto been the prevailing opinion among the learned, either of ancient or of modern times. Many of the most celebrated theories we meet with in the history both of physics and of metaphysics, have taken their rise from the zeal of philosophers to elude this very conclusion, which appeared to them too extravagant to merit a particular refutation. It was this idea which gave birth to the scheme of Materialism; to the Plastic Nature of Cudworth; to the Mechanical Theories of the universe proposed by Descartes and Leibnitz; and to various others equally gratuitous and not less extravagant. As these theories are not yet entirely abandoned by philosophers, a slight review of the most remarkable may be supposed necessary for the complete illustration of this subject; and I shall accordingly allot for that purpose a note at the end of this volume.*

The different hypotheses to which I have now alluded have been adopted by ingenious men in preference to the simple and sublime doctrine which supposes the order of the universe to be not only at first established, but every moment maintained by the incessant agency of one supreme mind,—a doctrine against which no objection can be stated but what is founded on prejudices resulting from our own imperfections. How far, indeed, the events we see are actually produced by the immediate hand of God, or how far he may avail himself of the instrumentality of subordinate intelligences, it is impossible for us to determine; but of this we may rest assured, that when he chooses to communicate a certain measure of power to any of his creatures, and

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historical mistake, which I shall take this opportunity to correct. "Malebranche," he observes, "and other Cartesians, made the doctrine of the universal and sole efficacy of the Deity the foundation of all their philosophy. *It had, however, no authority in England.* Locke, *Clarke*, and Cudworth never so much as take notice of it, but suppose all along that matter has a real, though subordinate and derived power."—*Hume's Essays*, vol. ii. p. 475. Edit. of 1784.

Mr Hume was probably led to connect, in this last sentence, the name of Clarke with those of Locke and Cudworth, by taking for granted that his metaphysical opinions agreed exactly with those commonly ascribed to Sir Isaac Newton. The above quotation proves that in fact his opinion, in so far as *matter* is concerned, was the same with that of Malebranche.

*See Note (D.) at the end.

employs their operations to accomplish the ends of his providence, it is not because he is himself incompetent to the magnitude, or to the multiplicity of the effects which take place in the universe. And, therefore, the consideration of these effects, how astonishing soever they may be, furnishes no argument in favor of the theories which have already been enumerated.

How powerfully the speculations of philosophers on this subject have been influenced by prejudices suggested by the analogy of human nature, appears from various passages both in ancient and modern authors.

In the seventh chapter of the Treatise *De Mundo*, ascribed to Aristotle, the author represents it as unbecoming the *dignity* of the Supreme Being, *αὐτουργεῖν ἅπαντα*, "to set his hand to every thing."—"If it were not congruous in respect of the state and majesty of Xerxes, the great king of Persia, that he should condescend to do all the meanest offices himself, much less can this be thought suitable in respect of God." Even Mr. Boyle, one of the profoundest, and one of the most pious of our English philosophers, seems to have considered it as derogating from the beauty and perfection of the universe, to suppose that the Divine agency is constantly necessary to preserve it in order, or that he is obliged to employ subordinate intelligences to supply the defects of his mechanism. "It seems manifest enough," according to him, "that whatsoever is done in the world, at least where the rational soul intervenes not, is really effected by corporeal causes and agents, according to the laws settled by the Omniscient Author of things." And elsewhere he observes, "That as it more recommends the skill of an engineer to contrive an elaborate engine, so as that there need nothing to reach his ends in it but the contrivance of parts void of understanding, than if it were necessary that ever and anon a discreet servant should be employed to concur notably to the operations of this or that part, or to hinder the engine from being out of order, so it more sets off the wisdom of God in the fabric of the universe, that he can make so vast a machine perform all those many things which he designed it should, by the mere

contrivance of brute matter managed by certain laws of motion, and upheld by his ordinary and general concourse, than if he employed from time to time an intelligent overseer to regulate and control the motion of the parts." *—"What may be the opinion of others," says Lord Kames, "with respect to this argument of Mr. Boyle, I cannot say, but to me it is perfectly conclusive. Considering this universe as a great machine, the workmanship of an intelligent cause, I cannot avoid thinking it the more complete the less mending or interposition it requires. The perfection of every piece of workmanship, human and divine, consists in its answering the designed purpose, without bestowing further labor upon it."†

The notions of the ancient Epicureans concerning the happiness of the Deity, which they thought could not fail to be impaired by the incessant cares and the unremitted exertions of a superintending Providence, plainly took their rise from the same source. They are beautifully expressed in the following verses of *Lucretius*, where, by the way, he has artfully blended various other topics of sceptical declamation not very consistent with each other, or with that just now mentioned.

"Nam (proh sancta Deûm tranquillâ pectora pace,
Quæ placidum degunt ævum, vitamque serenam!)
Quis regere immensi summam, quis habere profundi
Indu manu validas potis est moderanter habenas?
Quis pariter cœlos omneis convertere? et omneis
Ignibus ætheriis terras suffire feraceis?
Omnibus inque locis esse omni tempore præsto?
Nubibus ut tenebras faciat, cœlique serena
Concutiat sonitu? tum fulmina mittat, et ædeis
Sæpe suas disturbet, et in deserta recedens
Sæviat exercens telum, quod sæpe nocenteis
Præterit, exanimatque indignos inque merenteis?" ‡

The logical inconsistency of this passage (the poetical merit of which cannot be too much admired,) is sufficiently obvious. For what is it that constitutes the astonishing sublimity of the description? What but the

* Enquiry into the Vulgar Notion of Nature.
† Essay on the Laws of Motion, published in the Essays, Physical and Literary, of the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh.
‡ Lucret. Lib. ii. v. 1092.

magnitude and the multiplicity of those physical changes which the poet represents as every moment exhibited to our view? And it is from this very magnitude and multiplicity in the phenomena that he infers the impossibility of their being produced by God; first, because such an exertion would disturb the tranquillity of his repose; and secondly, because it exceeds the limits of his power. Surely the *greater the change* the more strongly does it evince the necessity of a cause; nor is it easy to conceive a more extraordinary inference, than to deny that the cause exists, because in degree it passes the bounds of our comprehension.

If the power of God be unequal to the accomplishment of all these wonders, what other name shall we give to the mysterious energy from which they proceed? Grant only the reality of this *energy* or *active power*, and you grant the necessity of *mind* to account for the phenomena of the universe. And further than this I do not push our conclusions in this part of the argument.*

How much more philosophical than the lines just quoted from Lucretius, I may add how much more sublime, is the well known passage of our English poet!

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* Even Horace in his graver moments bestows on the Epicurean system the title of a *mad philosophy*, and acknowledges its effects in unsettling his own mind. It is remarkable that he ascribes the revival of his old Stoical impressions to some of those phenomena of nature from which Lucretius draws an opposite conclusion.

"Parcus Deorum cultor et infrequens,
Insanientis dum sapientiæ
Consultus erro: nunc retrorsum
Vela dare, atque iterare cursus
Cogor relictos. Namque Diespiter
Igni corusco nubila dividens
Plerumque, *per purum tonantes*
Egit equos volucremque currum;
Quo bruta tellus et vaga flumina,
Quo Styx," &c. &c.
Lib. I. Ode xxxiv.

This ode has been considered by Dacier and other critics as an ironical *jeu d'esprit* levelled against the Stoical doctrine of Providence. I am glad to find that Dr. Copleston, (a very high authority,) in his elegant and philosophical Prelections on Poetry, pronounces it to be an ode "Sincero animi ardore et summâ erga Deum pietate insignis."—*Prælectiones Academicæ Oxonii Habitæ* ab Edvardo Copleston, S. T. B. p. 278.

If (according to the very happy conjecture of the Abbé Gagliani) this ode is supposed to be merely the introduction to the following one *O Diva gratum quæ regis Antium*, this union of the two odes will be found to bestow on both, much additional sublimity and beauty. See the *Commentaires Inédits sur Horace*, published in the second volume of the Mélanges de Littérature of M. Suard. Paris, 1804.—A spirited translation of the two odes thus combined may be found in the Lycée of La Harpe, Vol II. p. 358, *et seq.*

"All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul;
That changed through all, and yet in all the same,
Great in the earth as in the ethereal frame,
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glows in the the stars, and blossoms in the trees;
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent."

This passage (as Dr. Joseph Warton has remarked) bears a very striking analogy to a noble one in the old Orphic verses, quoted in the treatise *περὶ κόσμου*, ascribed to Aristotle;* and it is not a little curious that the same ideas occur in some specimens of Hindoo poetry translated by Sir W. Jones, more particularly in the hymn to *Narrayna*, or the Spirit of God, taken (as he informs us) from the writings of their ancient authors.

"Omniscient Spirit, whose all ruling power
Bids from each sense bright emanations beam,
Glows in the rainbow, sparkles in the stream, &c. &c.†

How far indeed the doctrine expressed in these lines is agreeable to truth, (at least in so far as it involves the

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* "The learned have been much divided in their opinions concerning this piece." —See Warton's Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope, vol. ii. p. 168, and the authors there cited.

Dr. Warton's own opinion is, "that the Treatise *De Mundo ought* to be ascribed to Aristotle, notwithstanding the different form of its composition." (Ibid.) But he gives no reason for thinking so.

The learned Meiners (Historia Doctrinæ de Vero Deo) decides with confidence that Aristotle was not the author of it, and states particularly the grounds of this decision. That this was also the opinion of Dr. Parr will be seen from Note (E.)

† The lines above quoted from Pope have been censured by some writers as savouring of *Spinozism;* and the same censure has been extended to various passages in the *Seasons* of Thomson, particularly to the hymn at the end. I suspect strongly that the authors of this criticism have been but slightly acquainted with Spinoza's writings, otherwise they would never have confounded a system, which goes to the complete annihilation of every religious sentiment, with a doctrine which (although somewhat approaching to it in phraseology) has plainly originated in feelings of deep, if not of mystical devotion. The former tends to explain away the existence of God by identifying him with matter, the latter to give life and expression to matter by representing every object as full of God.

The same mode of speaking occurs frequently in the Sacred Writings, as when it is said that "in God we live and move and have our being." It is thus also that thunder is called his voice, the wind his breath, and the tempest the blast of his nostrils. Upon a subject of this nature, it is impossible to express ourselves in a language which is not more or less metaphorical; but the import of these metaphors must be collected from the scope and spirit of the reasonings with which they are connected. The theory of the *Anima mundi*, how absurd and dangerous soever, when pushed to its utmost logical consequences, is certainly suggested by one of the most obvious and natural of all analogies—that of our own frame; and therefore it is but fair to put the most favourable construction possible on the views of those who first adopted it. To compare it to the *Pantheism* of Spinoza and his followers

supposition of the *unity* of God) we are not yet warranted by any of the reasonings I have stated to pronounce. I would only at present remark the *simplicity* and the *sublimity* of the doctrine,—two recommendations which, on a subject of this nature, furnish no inconsiderable presumptions that the doctrine is true. For how is it possible to conceive that the limited powers of man are able to imagine an order of things more simple and sublime than what exists in reality? Mr. Boyle indeed, in the passage formerly quoted from him, represents the supposition of God's incessant agency as detracting from the perfection and beauty of the universe, and appeals to those principles on which we judge of the skill and ingenuity displayed in the structure of a machine. But the illustration is by no means apposite. The intention of a machine is to save labor, and therefore the less frequently the interposition of the artist is necessary, the more completely does the machine accomplish the end for which it was made. These ideas surely do not apply to the works of the Almighty. The multiplicity of his operations neither distract his attention nor exhaust his power; nor can we suppose him reduced to the necessity of abridging their number by calling mechanism to his aid, without imputing to him the imperfections which mark our own circumscribed faculties and dependent condition.

SECTION II.

Of the Argument for the Existence of God from Final Causes.

HAVING treated at considerable length of the foundations of our reasoning from the Effect to the Cause, and of the evidences of Active Power exhibited in the uni-

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betrays a disposition to discredit the noblest passages in the heathen moralists, and may perhaps lead to other inferences, of which *some* of the writers who have given countenance to this comparison are not aware.

> "Estne Dei sedes nisi terra, et pontus, et aer,
> Et cœlum, et virtus? Superos quid quærimus ultra?
> Jupiter est quodcunque vides, quocunque moveris."

I pity the man who in these lines can perceive any thing approaching to atheism. —(See Dissertation prefixed to the Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica, Part. II. pp. 76, 77.)

verse, I proceed now to illustrate that principle of our nature which leads us to apprehend intelligence or design when we see a variety of means conspiring to a particular end. In examining this part of our constitution, my object is similar to what I had in view in the speculations in which we have last been engaged, not to bring to light any new or abstruse conclusion, but to vindicate against the cavils of sceptics, a mode of reasoning that is equally familiar to the philosopher and the vulgar, and which is not more intimately connected with our religious belief than with our rational conduct in the common business of life. What this mode of reasoning is will be best explained by a few examples:—And for this purpose I shall avail myself of the evidences for the existence of God which Socrates is said to have appealed to in his conversation on this subject with Aristodemus, as it is related with an almost divine simplicity in the Memorabilia of Xenophon.*

"Tell me, Aristodemus, is there any man whom you admire on account of his merit?"

Aristodemus having answered "*Many;*"—"Name some of them, I pray you."

"I admire," said Aristodemus, "Homer for his Epic Poetry; Melanippides for his Dithyrambics; Sophocles for Tragedy; Polycletes for Statuary; and Zeuxis for Painting."

"But which seems to you most worthy of admiration, Aristodemus,—the artist who forms Images void of Motion and Intelligence, or one who hath the skill to produce animals that are endued not only with activity, but understanding?"

"The *latter*, there can be no doubt," replied Aristodemus, "provided the production was not the effect of *chance*, but of wisdom and contrivance."

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* "Je ne sais s'il y a aucune preuve métaphysique plus frappante, et qui parle plus fortement à l'homme, que cet ordre admirable qui règne dans le monde; et s'il jamais il y a eu un plus bel argument que ce verset, *Cœli enarrant Gloriam Dei*. Aussi vous voyez, que Newton n'en apporte point d'autre à la fin de son *Optique* et de ses *Principes*. Il ne trouvoit point de raisonnement plus convainquant et plus beau en faveur de la Divinité que celui de Platon, qui fait dire à un de ses interlocuteurs, 'Vous jugez que j'ai une âme intelligente parceque vous appercevez de l'ordre dans mes paroles et dans mes actions; jugez donc en voyant l'ordre de ce monde qu'il y a une âme souverainement intelligente.'"—(*Voltaire; Elem. de Philosophie*, Chap. i. De Dieu.)

...al is able, like man, to provide
...t and cold, of thirst and hun-
...dies for the time of sickness,
... nature hath given by a well
...at can receive, like him, in-
... or so happily keep in memo-
...d heard, and learnt? These
... not that man is, as it were, *a*
...ible creation; so far doth he
...ndowments of soul or body,
... have been produced therein!
... had been joined to the mind
...he latter would have stood
...nable to execute the well de-
...he human form have been of
... long as it remained destitute
...ee, Aristodemus, hath been
... body no less wonderful; and
...ds take no thought for me!'
...re to convince thee of their

... and inform me," said Aris-
..., or *ought not* to do; in like
...requently do to thee."
...tus! supposest thou, that
... oracle to *all* the Athenians,
...f, by their prodigies, they
...o *all* mankind,—the things
... they dumb to *thee* alone?
...n whom they have placed
...t thou they would have
... persuasion of their being
...erable, if so be they had
...t even man himself, long
... gross delusion?—How
...erest, or remarkest not,
...wealths, most renowned
...iquity, are those whose
...e most observable? and
...o well disposed to serve
... when reason bears the

"But since there are many things, some of which we can easily see the *use* of, while we cannot say of others, to what purpose they were produced,—which of these, Aristodemus, do you suppose the work of wisdom?"

"It should seem the most reasonable to affirm it of those whose fitness and utility are so evidently apparent."

"But it is evidently apparent, that He who at the beginning made man, endued him with Senses *because* they were *good* for him,—eyes wherewith to behold whatever was visible, and ears to hear whatever was to be heard. For say, Aristodemus, to what purpose should odors be prepared, if the sense of smelling had been denied? Or why the distinctions of bitter and sweet, of savoury and unsavoury, unless a palate had been likewise given, conveniently placed, to arbitrate between them, and declare the difference? Is not that Providence, Aristodemus, in a most eminent manner conspicuous, which, because the eye of man is so delicate in its contexture, hath therefore prepared eyelids like doors, whereby to secure it—which extend of themselves whenever it is needful, and again close when sleep approaches? Are not these eyelids provided as it were with a fence on the edge of them, to keep off the wind and guard the eye? Even the eyebrow itself is not without its office; but as a pent house is prepared to turn off the sweat, which, falling from the forehead, might enter and annoy that no less tender than astonishing part of us! Is it not to be admired that the ears should take in sounds of every sort, and yet are not too much filled by them? That the fore teeth of the animal should be formed in such a manner as is evidently best suited for the cutting of its food, as those on the side for grinding it in pieces? That the mouth through which this food is conveyed should be placed so near the nose and the eyes as to prevent the passing *unnoticed* whatever is unfit for nourishment; while nature, on the contrary, hath set at a distance, and concealed from the senses, all that might disgust or any way offend them? And can'st thou still doubt, Aristodemus, whether a disposition of parts like *this* should be the work of chance, or of wisdom and contrivance?"

"I have no longer any doubt, replied Aristodemus; and indeed the more I consider it, the more evident it appears to me, that man must be the *masterpiece* of some great artificer, carrying along with it infinite marks of the love and favor of Him who hath thus formed it."

"And what thinkest thou, Aristodemus, of that *desire* in the individual which leads to the continuance of the species? Of that tenderness and affection in the female towards her young, so necessary for its preservation? Of that unremitted love of life, and dread of dissolution, which take such strong possession of us from the moment we begin to be?"

"I think of them," answered Aristodemus, "as so many regular operations of the same great and wise artist, deliberately determined to preserve what he hath once made."

"But further,—unless thou desirest to ask me questions;—seeing, Aristodemus, thou thyself art conscious of reason and intelligence, supposest thou there is no intelligence elsewhere? Thou knowest thy body to be a small part of that wide extended earth which thou every where beholdest;—the moisture contained in it thou also knowest to be a small portion of that mighty mass of waters whereof seas themselves are but a part; while the rest of the elements contribute out of their abundance to thy formation. It is the soul then alone,—that intellectual part of us! which is come to *thee* by some lucky chance; from, I know not where; if so be, there is indeed no intelligence elsewhere. And we must be forced to confess that this stupendous universe, with all the various bodies contained therein, equally amazing, whether we consider their magnitude or number, whatever their use, whatever their order,—*all* have been produced, not by *intelligence* but *chance!*"

"It is with difficulty that I can suppose otherwise," returned Aristodemus, "for I behold none of those gods whom you speak of as making and governing all things; whereas I see the artists, when at their work, here among us."

"Neither yet seest thou thy soul, Aristodemus, which, however, most assuredly governs thy body; although it

may well seem, by thy manner of talking, that it is *chance*, and not *reason* which governs thee."

"I do not despise the gods," said Aristodemus; "on the contrary, I conceive so highly of their excellence, as to suppose they stand in no need either of me or of my services."

"Thou mistakest the matter, Aristodemus; the greater magnificence they have shown in their care of *thee*, so much the more honor and service thou owest them."

"Be assured," said Aristodemus, "if I once could be persuaded the gods took care of man, I should want no monitor to remind me of my duty."

"And canst thou doubt, Aristodemus, if the gods take care of man! Hath not the glorious privilege of walking upright been *alone* bestowed on him, whereby he may, with the better advantage, survey what is around him; contemplate with more ease those splendid objects which are above; and avoid the numerous ills and inconveniences which would otherwise befall him? Other animals, indeed, they have provided with feet, by which they may remove from one place to another; but to *man*, they have also given *hands*, with which he can form many things for his use, and make himself happier than creatures of any other kind. A tongue hath been bestowed on every other animal; but what animal, except man, hath the power of forming words with it, whereby to explain his thoughts, and make them intelligible to others? and to show that the gods have had regard to his very pleasures, they have not limited them, like those of other animals, to times and seasons, but man is left to indulge in them whenever not hurtful to him.

"But it is not with respect to the body alone that the gods have shown themselves thus bountiful to man! their most excellent gift is that *soul* they have infused into him, which so far surpasses what is elsewhere to be found. For by what animal except man, is even the existence of those gods discovered, who have produced, and still uphold, in such regular order, this beautiful and stupendous frame of the universe? What other species of creatures are to be found that can serve—that can adore

them? What other animal is able, like man, to provide against the assaults of heat and cold, of thirst and hunger? that can lay up remedies for the time of sickness, and improve the strength nature hath given by a well proportioned exercise? that can receive, like him, information and instruction; or so happily keep in memory what he hath seen, and heard, and learnt? These things being so, who seeth not that man is, as it were, *a God* in the midst of this visible creation; so far doth he surpass, whether in the endowments of soul or body, all animals whatsoever that have been produced therein! For if the body of the ox had been joined to the mind of man, the acuteness of the latter would have stood him in small stead, while unable to execute the well designed plan; nor would the human form have been of more use to the brute, so long as it remained destitute of understanding. But in thee, Aristodemus, hath been joined to a wonderful soul a body no less wonderful; and sayest thou after this, 'the gods take no thought for me!' What wouldst thou, then, more to convince thee of their care?"

"I would they should send and inform me," said Aristodemus, "what things I *ought*, or *ought not* to do; in like manner as thou sayest they frequently do to thee."

"And what then, Aristodemus! supposest thou, that when the gods give out some oracle to *all* the Athenians, they mean it not for *thee*?—If, by their prodigies, they declare aloud to all Greece,—to *all* mankind,—the things which shall befall them,—are they dumb to *thee* alone? —And art *thou* the only person whom they have placed beyond their care? Believest thou they would have wrought into the mind of man a persuasion of their being *able* to make him happy or miserable, if so be they had no such *power*?—Or would not even man himself, long ere this, have seen through the gross delusion?—How is it, Aristodemus, thou rememberest, or remarkest not, that the kingdoms and commonwealths, most renowned as well for their wisdom as antiquity, are those whose piety and devotion hath been the most observable? and that even man himself is never so well disposed to serve the Deity as in that part of life when reason bears the

greatest sway, and his judgment supposed in its full strength and maturity. Consider, my Aristodemus, that the soul which resides in thy body can govern it at pleasure. Why then may not the soul of the universe, which pervades and animates every part of it, govern it in like manner?—If thine eye hath the power to take in many objects, and these placed at no small distance from it, marvel not if the eye of the Deity can, at one glance, comprehend the whole! And as thou perceivest it not beyond thy ability to extend thy care, at the same time, to the concerns of Athens, Egypt, Sicily, why thinkest thou, my Aristodemus, that the Providence of God may not easily extend itself throughout the whole universe? As, therefore, among men we make best trial of the affection and gratitude of our neighbour by showing him kindness, and discover his wisdom by consulting him in our distress, do thou, in like manner, behave towards the gods. And if thou wouldst experience what their wisdom and what their love, render thyself deserving the communication of some of those divine secrets which may not be penetrated by man, and are imparted to those alone who consult, who adore, who obey the Deity. Then shalt thou, my Aristodemus, understand there is a Being whose eye pierceth throughout all nature, and whose ear is open to every sound; extended to all place; extending through all time; and whose bounty and care can know no other bounds than those fixed by his own creation!"

"By this discourse, and others of the like nature, Socrates taught his friends that they were not only to forbear whatever was impious, unjust, or unbecoming before men; but even when alone they ought to have a regard to all their actions, since the gods have their eyes continually upon us, and none of our designs can be concealed from them." *

The evidence which the foregoing considerations afford for the existence of God constitutes what is commonly called the argument from *Final Causes*, and as the expression has the sanction of use in its favor, we

* Xenophon's Memorabilia of Socrates. Translated by Sarah Fielding.

shall continue to employ it, notwithstanding its impropriety. It was first introduced by Aristotle, who distinguished causes into four kinds, the Efficient, the Material, the Formal, and the Final: A distinction, which, as Dr. Reid justly observes, "like many other of Aristotle's, is only a distinction of the various meanings of an ambiguous word; for the efficient, the matter, the form, and the end, have nothing common in their nature by which they may be accounted species of the same genus. But the Greek word which we translate *cause* had these four different meanings in Aristotle's days, and we have added *other* meanings. We do not indeed call the matter or form of a thing its cause; but we have final causes, second causes, instrumental causes, immediate causes, predisponent causes, and many others." *

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* This distinction of Aristotle's is illustrated by Seneca in his 65th Epistle. "Causam Aristotelis putat tribus modis dici. Prima inquit, causa est ipsa materia, sine quâ nihil potest effici. Secunda opifex. Tertia, forma quæ unicuique operi imponitur, tanquam statuæ; nam hanc Aristoteles εἶδος vocat. Quarta quoque, inquit, his accedit, propositum totius operis.

"Quid sit hoc aperiam. Æs prima statuæ causa est: nunquam enim facta esset, nisi fuisset id, ex quo ea funderetur, ducereturve. Secunda causa, artifex est: non potuisset enim æs illud in habitum statuæ figurari, nisi accessissent peritæ manus. Tertia causa est forma: neque enim statua ista Doryphorus aut Diadumenos vocaretur, nisi hæc illi esset impressa facies. Quarta causa est, faciendi propositum: nam nisi hoc fuisset, facta non esset. Quid est propositum? Quod invitavit artificem, quod ille secutus fecit. Vel pecunia est hoc, si venditurus fabricavit; vel gloria, si laboravit in nomen; vel religio, si donum templo paravit. Ergo et hæc causa est, propter quam fit. An non putas inter causas facti operis numerandum, quo remoto factum non esset?"

Aristotle's own words on the subject (Natur. Auscult.) are thus translated by Mr. Harris.

"In one manner that may be called a *cause*, out of which, existing as a part of it, any thing is made or compounded. Thus is brass the cause of a statue, silver of a cup, and so also the higher genera in which these are included (as metals the genus of brass and silver, body the genus including metals, &c.) In another way, the form and exemplar of any thing is its cause; that is to say, in other words, the definition or rationale of its essence (that which, characterizing it to be such a particular thing, distinguishes it from all things else,) and of this rationale the several higher genera. Thus the cause of the diapason or octave is the proportion of two to one; and more generally than that is number, and is moreover the several parts out of which this definition is formed. Add to this cause, that other, from whence the original principle of change, or of ceasing to change, as for instance the person who deliberates is the cause of that which results from such deliberation; the father is the cause of the son, and in general the efficient of the thing effected, the power changing to the thing changed. Besides these causes there is that also which is considered as the end, that is to say, the cause for the sake of which the thing is done. Thus the cause of exercising is health; for if it be asked why does he use exercise? We say to preserve his health; and having said thus much, we think we have given the proper cause."—*Works of James Harris, Esq.* Vol. I. pp. 156, 157.

These quotations (in which I think there is a great deal of what Dr. Priestley somewhere calls *solemn trifling*) appear to me to justify fully the criticism I bor-

Dr. Reid has observed that the argument from final causes, when reduced to a syllogism, contains two propositions. First, that design may be traced from its effects: This is the major proposition. The minor is, that there are appearances of design in the universe. The ancient sceptics, he says, granted the first, but denied the second. The moderns (in consequence of the discoveries in natural philosophy) have been obliged to abandon the ground which their predecessors maintained, and have disputed the major proposition.

Among those who have denied the possibility of tracing design from its effects Mr. Hume is the most eminent, and he seems to have considered his reasonings on this subject as forming one of the most splendid parts of his philosophy; according to him all such inferences are inconclusive, being neither demonstrable by reasoning, nor deducible from experience.

In examining Mr. Hume's argument on this subject, Dr. Reid admits that the inferences we make of design from its effects are not the result of reasoning or experience; but still he contends such inferences may be made with a degree of certainty equal to what the human mind is able to attain in any instance whatever. The opinions we form of the talents of other men, nay, our belief that other men are intelligent beings, are founded on this very inference of design from its effects. Intelligence and design are not objects of our senses; and yet we judge of them every moment from external conduct and behaviour, with as little hesitation as we pronounce on the existence of what we immediately perceive.

While Dr. Reid contends in this manner for the authority of this important principle of our constitution, he bestows due praise on Mr. Hume for the acuteness with which he has exposed the inconclusiveness of the com-

rowed from Dr. Reid, that they amount only to an exposition of the different meanings of an ambiguous word. I believe it would be for the advantage of moral science if the phrase *final cause* were as completely banished from our language as the phrases *material* and *formal* causes; but when modes of expression are sanctioned by universal use, I do not consider myself as entitled to lead the way in innovations. It is sufficient for me to caution my readers against the impropriеties of common language, and to guard as far as I can against the errors in reasoning to which they lead.

mon *demonstrations* of the existence of a designing cause, to be found among the writers on natural religion; and he acknowledges the service that, without intending it, he has thereby rendered to the cause of truth; inasmuch as, by the alarming consequences he deduces from his doctrine, he has invited philosophers to an accurate examination of a subject which had formerly been considered in a very superficial manner, and has pointed out to them indirectly the true foundation on which this important article of our belief ought to be placed. With the same view it may be of some use, before we proceed further, to confirm such of Mr. Hume's principles as appear to be just by some additional remarks and illustrations.

First, then, it may be observed, (as a strong presumption that our belief of the existence of a designing cause is not the result of reasoning) that it has prevailed in all nations and ages, among the unlearned, as well as among the learned. Indeed, without a capacity of inferring design from its effects, it would be impossible for us to conduct ourselves in the common affairs of life; a consideration which of itself renders it probable to those who are acquainted with the general analogy of our constitution, that it is not intrusted to the slow and uncertain exercise of our reasoning powers, but that it arises from some intuitive perception of the mind.

In order to feel the full force of these observations, it is necessary to consider, that without a capacity of inferring design from its effects, it would be impossible for us to form any judgment of the intellectual powers, or of the characters of other men, or even to know that they are intelligent beings. The qualities in their minds are not objects of our senses, we only perceive their effects; but these effects indicate to us certain designs and purposes from which they proceed, as certainly as an impression made on an organ of sense indicates the existence of the object. The inferences we make of intelligence and design, as displayed in the universe, are perfectly analogous to this; and whatever sceptical doubts affect our conclusions in the one case are equally well founded in the other.

As a further proof that this principle is not demonstrable, we may remark, that those authors who have been most successful in exposing the doubts of sceptics on the subject have had recourse not to argument, but to ridicule, and have rested their cause chiefly on a view of the absurdities and inconsistencies into which similar doubts would lead us, if they were extended to the common concerns of life: In a word, the only proof they give of the principle, is by showing that no man can call it in question, without justly exposing himself to the charge of insanity.

"Hîc ego non mirer esse quemquam, qui sibi persuadeat, corpora quædam solida atque individua vi et gravitate ferri, mundumque effici ornatissimum et pulcherrimum ex eorum corporum concursione fortuitâ? Hoc qui existimat fieri potuisse, non intelligo, cur non idem putet, si innumerabiles unius et viginti formæ literarum vel aureæ, vel quales libet,* aliquo conjiciantur, posse ex his in terram excussis annales Ennii, ut deinceps legi possint, effici; quod nescio an ne in uno quidem versu possit tantum valere fortuna. Isti autem quemadmodum asseverant, ex corpusculis non colore, non qualitate aliquâ, quam *ποιότητα* Græci vocant, non sensu præditis, sed concurrentibus temerè atque casu, mundum esse perfectum? Vel innumerabiles potius in omni puncto temporis alios nasci, alios interire? Quòd si mundum efficere potest concursus atomorum, cur porticum, cur templum, cur domum, cur urbem non potest, quæ sunt minus operosa et multo quidem faciliora? Certe ita temerè de mundo effutiunt, ut mihi quidem nunquam hunc admirabilem cœli ornatum, qui locus est proximus, suspexisse videantur." †

So far, therefore, we agree with Mr. Hume, in admitting that our inferences of design from its effects are not the result of reasoning. Still further we agree with him in admitting, that these inferences are not the result of experience.

In proof of this it is sufficient to observe, that expe-

* It has been thought by some that this passage of Cicero may have perhaps suggested the first idea of the art of Printing by means of moveable types.

† De Nat. Deor. II. 37.

rience can only inform us of what *is*, and not of what *must be;* or, as Dr. Reid expresses it, experience *can only discover to us what is* CONTINGENTLY *true;* it cannot in any instance lead us to the knowledge of *necessary* truth. Now, our belief that a combination of means conspiring to a particular end implies intelligence, involves a perception of necessary truth. It is not that such a combination has been always or generally found to proceed from an intelligent cause, but that an intelligent cause was necessary to its production, and that the contrary supposition is absurd.

But further, experience can only inform us of a connexion between a sign and the thing signified, in those cases in which both of these have been separate and distinct objects of our perceptions; but in the instance before us the thing signified is not an immediate object of sense, nor indeed of consciousness; for even in my own case I perceive the existence of mind only from its operations and effects. In other words, my knowledge of the *thing signified* is not *direct:* it is only *relative to the signs* by which it is suggested to the understanding.

In what manner, then, it may be asked, shall we explain the origin of our conviction that the universe is the work of a designing cause, if it be granted that this conviction is neither founded on reasoning nor on experience? According to Mr. Hume, nothing more is necessary than these concessions to show that it is an illusion of the imagination, or a prejudice of the nursery.

But surely the inference is too hasty; for are there not many truths, the contrary of which we feel to be impossible, which are neither demonstrable by reasoning, nor confirmed by experience? Such are all those truths which are perceived by an intuitive judgment of the mind. The authority of these truths is at least on a footing with those truths which rest on demonstration, inasmuch as all demonstration is ultimately founded on them; and it is incomparably superior to that of truths learned from experience, inasmuch as the contrary of *these* is always conceivable, and never implies any absurdity or contradiction.

From the observations already made in the prosecution of this argument, I flatter myself it sufficiently appears, that if there be such a thing as an intuitive perception or judgment of the mind, the inferences we make of design from its effects are entitled to the appellation. A capacity of forming such inferences is plainly an essential part of our constitution; and to dispute their certainty in the common conduct of life, by urging sceptical subtilties in opposition to them, would expose a man to the charge of insanity, as infallibly as if he were to dispute the certainty of a mathematical axiom.*

But leaving these abstract topics, let us for a moment attend to the scope of the sceptical argument as it bears on the evidences of Natural Religion. To those who examine it with attention it must appear obvious, that, if it proves any thing, it leads to this general conclusion, that it would be perfectly impossible for the *Deity*, if he *did* exist, to exhibit to man any satisfactory evidence of design by the order and perfection of his works. That every thing we see *is consistent* with the supposition of its being the work of an intelligent author, Philo would (I presume) have granted; and at any rate, supposing the order of the universe to have been as complete as imagination can conceive, it would not obviate in the least the objection stated in the dialogue, inasmuch as this objection is founded not on any appearances of disorder or imperfection, but on the impossibility of rendering intelligence and design manifest to our faculties by the effects they produce. Whether this logical prop-

* The foregoing observations have been all touched upon by former writers. What follows has not hitherto (so far as I know) been urged in opposition to Mr. Hume, and to my mind is more satisfactory than any view of the subject that has yet been taken by his opponents. It is, however, after all, little more than a comment on some *concessions* made in the course of the argument, by the sceptical Philo; of which concessions I think his opponent, Cleanthes, might have availed himself more triumphantly than he has done.—(See Mr. Hume's Posthumous Dialogues on Natural Religion.) It must always be remembered that the latter is the hero of the dialogue, and is to be understood as speaking Mr. Hume's own opinions.—(See a Confidential Letter of his to his friend Sir Gilbert Elliot, which I have published in the second volume of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, p. 532, third edition.—See also the concluding paragraph of the Dialogue.) I think it fair to recall this to the reader's memory, as the reasonings of Philo have been repeatedly quoted as parts of Hume's Philosophical System, although the words of Shylock and Caliban might with equal justice be quoted as speaking the real sentiments of Shakspeare.

osition is or is not true, can be decided only by an appeal to the judgment of the human understanding in analogous circumstances. If I were thrown ashore on a desert island, and was anxious to leave behind me some memorial which might inform those who should afterwards visit the same spot, that it had once been inhabited by a human being, what expedient could I employ but to execute some work of art; to rear a dwelling, to enclose a piece of ground, or to arrange a number of stones in such a symmetrical order that their position could not be ascribed to chance? This would surely be a language intelligible to all nations, whether civilized or savage; and which, without the help of reasoning, would convey its meaning with the force of a perception. It was thus that *Aristippus* the *Cyrenaic* felt (according to the story told by *Vitruvius)* when, being shipwrecked on an unknown coast, and seeing some geometrical diagrams traced on the sand, he called aloud to his companions,—*Bene speremus, comites,* HOMINUM *enim vestigia video.*

Now all this seems wonderfully applicable to the subject before us. If the universe had really been created by a powerful and intelligent being, whose pleasure it was to proclaim to human reason his existence and attributes, what means could have been devised more effectual for this purpose than those actually employed! A display of order, of beauty, of contrivance, obvious to the apprehensions of the most unlearned, and commanding more and more our admiration and our wonder as our faculties improve, and as our knowledge extends. These evidences of power, of wisdom, and of goodness may be regarded as *natural and universal signs* by which the Creator reveals himself to his creatures. There is, accordingly, "no speech where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone through all the earth and their words to the end of the world."

That in these remarks I have done no injustice to Philo's reasoning, appears from a remarkable passage which occurs in a subsequent part of the dialogue, where, in my opinion, he yields without reserve the only point for which it was of much importance for a scep-

tic to contend. The logical subtilties formerly quoted about *experience* and *belief* (even supposing them to remain unanswered) are but little calculated to shake the authority of principles on which we are every moment called on to act in the business of life. I shall transcribe in Philo's words the passage I allude to, premising only, that, for this memorable concession, (so contrary in its spirit to the sceptical cavils of the ancient Epicureans) we are chiefly indebted to the lustre thrown on the order of nature by the physical researches of the two last centuries.

"Supposing there were a God who did not discover himself immediately to our senses, were it possible for him to give stronger proofs of his existence than what appear on the whole face of nature? What indeed could such a divine being do but copy the present economy of things; render many of his artifices so plain that no stupidity could mistake them; afford glimpses of still greater artifices which demonstrate his prodigious superiority over our narrow apprehensions, and conceal altogether a great many from such imperfect creatures?" *

Another concession extorted from Philo by the discoveries of modern science is still more important. I need not point out its coincidence with some remarks already made: "A purpose, an intention, a design, strikes every where the most careless, the most stupid thinker, and no man can be so hardened in absurd systems as at all times to reject it. *That nature does nothing in vain* is a maxim established in all the schools, merely from the contemplation of the works of nature, without any religious purpose; and from a firm conviction of its truth, an anatomist who had observed a new organ or canal would never be satisfied till he had also discovered its use and intention. One great foundation of the Copernican system is the maxim, *that nature acts by the simplest methods, and chooses the most proper means to any end;* and astronomers often, without thinking of it, lay this strong foundation of piety and religion. The same thing is observable in other parts

* Dialogues on Natural Religion, p. 232.

of philosophy; and thus all the sciences almost lead us insensibly to acknowledge a first intelligent author; and their authority is often so much the greater, as they do not directly profess that intention." *

"But," says Mr. Hume in one of his Philosophical Essays, "it is only when two *species* of objects are found to be constantly conjoined that we can infer the one from the other; and where an effect presented which was entirely singular, and could not be comprehended under any known *species*, I do not see that we could form any conjecture or inference at all concerning its cause. If experience and observation and analogy be indeed the only guides which we can reasonably follow in inferences of this nature, both the effect and cause must bear a similarity and resemblance to other effects and causes which we know, and which we have found in many instances to be conjoined with each other." † If I understand the scope and import of this reasoning, nothing more is necessary for its refutation but to explain its meaning. To what, then, does it amount? Merely to this! "That if we had been accustomed to see words produced, some by design and others without it, and had observed that such a world as this which we inhabit was always the effect of design, we might then, from past experience, conclude that it was in this way our world was produced; but having no such experience we have no means of forming any conclusion about it." ‡

The argument, it is manifest, proceeds entirely on the supposition, that our inferences of design are in every case the result of experience, the contrary of which

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* Dialogues on Natural Religion, p. 228.

† Hume's Essays, Vol. II. p. 157.

As the discourse from which this passage is taken is composed in the form of a dialogue, I do not feel myself entitled to suppose that it expresses Mr. Hume's own opinion, more particularly as he has introduced the section with the following paragraph.—"I was lately engaged in conversation with a friend who loves sceptical paradoxes; where, though he advanced many principles of which I can by no means approve, yet as they seem to be curious, and to bear some relation to the chain of reasoning carried on throughout this inquiry, I shall here copy them from my memory as accurately as I can, in order to submit them to the judgment of the reader." From these words it may at least be inferred that Mr. Hume thought the paradox worthy of consideration, and therefore it would be improper to pass it over here entirely in silence.

‡ Reid's Essays.

has been already sufficiently shown; and which indeed (as Dr. Reid has remarked) "if it be admitted as a general truth, leads to this conclusion, that no man can have any evidence of the existence of any intelligent being but himself." *

Having said so much with respect to the sceptical objections suggested in Mr. Hume's philosophy against the argument from final causes, I proceed to consider another objection which some other philosophers have urged with similar views. In order to judge of the wisdom of any design it is necessary (they observe) to know, first, what end the artist proposes to himself, and then to examine the means which he has employed to accomplish it. But in the universe all we see is, that certain things *are* accomplished, without having an opportunity of comparing them with a plan previously proposed. A stone thrown at random must necessarily hit one object or another. When we see, therefore, such an effect produced, we are not entitled, independently of other information, to praise the dexterity of the marksman. It is *possible* indeed that this was the object he was aiming at, but as any other supposition is equally possible, it is evident that before we can judge of his skill we must be assured that this really was the case from his own authority.

To this objection it might perhaps be a sufficient answer to observe, that although from a single effect we may not be entitled to infer intelligence in the cause, yet when we see a number of causes conspiring to *one* end, the case is different. We here see not only that an effect takes place, but have an intuitive conviction that this was the very effect intended. From seeing a single stone strike an object, we may not be entitled to conclude that this was the object aimed at. But what conclusion would we draw if we saw the same

* See some remarks on this subject by Dr. Beattie. *Essay on Truth*, Part i. Chap. ii. § 2. Some of them indeed refer rather to our inferences of causation and power, than of intelligence and design, but the objection in question applies equally to our inferences in both cases, and Dr. Beattie's answer is no less satisfactory in the one than in the other.

"It is true the universe is, as one may say, a work *sui generis*," &c. P. 117, 2d Edit.

object invariably hit by a number of stones thrown in succession? Surely we should conclude that this was not merely the work of chance.

But this is not all. A variety of cases might be mentioned, in which we have really an opportunity of comparing the wisdom of nature with the ends to which it is directed. Of this many remarkable instances occur in the economy of the human body.

When any accident or disease injures the human frame, it is well known that the body possesses within itself a power of alleviating or remedying the evil. In consequence of this power, (which has been called the *vis medicatrix naturæ*) it happens that whenever the structure or functions of any part of the body are disturbed, such operations are immediately excited as have a tendency to restore the machine to its former state. If any of the solid parts of the body are divided in consequence of suppuration, wounds, or otherwise, the cavity is in time filled up and obliterated by the operation of natural causes. The breach in the internal parts is remedied, and the wound is gradually covered with a new skin. In many cases, too, in which parts are destroyed, efforts are made by nature to repair the injury. In this manner the skin, tendons, ligaments, and various other parts of the body are restored after having been destroyed. Even bones are restored; not only in cases of fracture, but sometimes a new bone has been formed even when the old one was entirely taken away. In all these instances we not only see an effect produced, but we see the efforts of nature directed to a particular end; inasmuch as, after being turned out of her ordinary course, she comes back to it again without any assistance from art.

There are, too, a great variety of cases, particularly in the animal economy, in which we see the same effect produced in different instances by very different means; and in which, of consequence, we have an opportunity of comparing the wisdom of nature with the ends she has in view. "Art and means," says Baxter, "are designedly multiplied, that we might not take it for the effects of chance: And in some cases the method itself is different, that we might see it is not the effect of

surd necessity." *—"I shall stop," says Derham, "at one prodigious work of nature and manifest contrivance of the Creator, and that is the circulation of the blood in the fœtus in the womb, so different from the method thereof after it is born."

The following ingenious remarks of Mr. Ray may be of use for the more complete illustration of the same argument. "Man is always mending and altering his works; but nature observes the same tenor, because her works are so perfect that there is no place for amendments, nothing that can be reprehended. The most sagacious men in so many ages have not been able to find any flaw in these divinely contrived and formed machines; no blot or error in the great volume of the world, as if any thing had been an imperfect essay at the first; nothing that can be altered for the better; nothing but if it were altered would be marred. This could not have been, had man's body been the work of chance, and not council and providence. Why should there be constantly the same parts? Why should they retain contantly the same places? Why should they be endued with the same shape and figure? Nothing so contrary as constancy and chance. Should I see a man throw the same number a thousand times together upon but three dice, could you persuade me that this were accidental, and that there was no necessary cause of it? How much more incredible, then, is it that constancy in such a variety, such a multiplicity of parts, should be the result of chance? Neither yet can these works be the effects of necessity or fate, for then there would be the same constancy observed in the smaller as well as in the larger parts of vessels! whereas *there* we see nature doth as it were sport itself, the minute ramifications of all the vessels, veins, arteries, and nerves, infinitely varying in individuals of the same species, so that they are not in any two alike." †

The foregoing passage I quote with the greater confidence, as I find that the most eminent and original physiologist at the present age has been led, by his en-

* Enquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul, Vol. I. p. 136. (Third Edition.)
† Ray's Wisdom of God in the Creation.

lightened researches concerning the laws of the animal economy, into a train of thinking strikingly similar.

"Nature," says Baron Cuvier, "while comprising herself strictly within those limits which the conditions necessary for existence prescribed to her, has yielded to her spontaneous fecundity wherever these conditions did not limit her operations; and without ever passing beyond the small number of combinations that can be realized in the essential modifications of the important organs, she seems to have given full scope to her fancy in filling up the subordinate parts. With respect to these, it is not inquired whether an individual form, whether a particular arrangement, be necessary. It seems often not to have been asked whether it be even useful in order to reduce it to practice. It is sufficient that it be possible, that it destroy not the harmony of the whole. Accordingly, as we recede from the principal organs, and approach to those of less importance, the varieties in structure and appearance become more numerous; and when we arrive at the surface of the body, where the parts the least essential and whose injuries are the least momentous, are placed, the number of varieties is so great that the conjoined labors of naturalists have not yet been able to give us an adequate idea of them." *

The science of comparative anatomy, too, furnishes very striking confirmations of the foregoing doctrine. From seeing the effect produced in *any one* animal, we might not perhaps be entitled to conclude that it was in order to produce this effect that the organ was contrived. But when, in the case of *different species* of animals, we see the same effect brought about by means extremely different, it is impossible for us to doubt that it was this common end which, in all these instances, nature had in view. And, by the way, it is such comparative views of the structure of different tribes that afford the best lights for guiding our researches concerning the functions of the different organs in the animal economy. "Incidenda autem animalia," (says Albinus in his preface to

* Leçons d'Anatomie Comparée.

Harvey's *Exercitatio de Motu Cordis*,) "quibus partes illæ quarum actiones quærimus eædem atque homini sunt, aut certe similes iis; ex quibus sine metu erroris judicare de illis hominis liceat. Quin et reliqua, si modo aliquam habeant ad hominem similitudinem, idonea sunt ad aliquod suppeditandum."

The coincidence between these last observations and the following passage from an anonymous writer, who seems to have made *comparative anatomy* his particular study, gives me much additional faith in their justness. "The *intention* of nature," he observes, "can no where be so well learned as from comparative anatomy; that is, if we would understand physiology, and reason on the functions in the animal economy, we must see how the same end is brought about in other species. We must contemplate the part or organ in different animals, its shape, position, connexion with the other parts, &c. and observe what thence arises. If we find ONE COMMON EFFECT constantly produced (though) in a very different way, then we may safely conclude that this is the USE or FUNCTION of the part. This reasoning can never betray us, if we are but sure of the facts." *

In comparing the anatomy of different tribes of animals we find that the differences we observe in their structure have a reference to their way of life, and the habits for which they are destined; so that from knowing the latter we might be able, in particular cases, to frame conjectures *a priori* concerning the former. Thus all animals that live on vegetable food have their small guts considerably larger and their great guts more capacious than such as feed on other animals. The latter again have their bladder more strong and muscular and less capacious than those that live on vegetable food, such as horses, cows, swine, &c. whose bladder of urine is perfectly membranous and very large. In both of these cases the differences have a manifest reference to the kinds of food on which the animal is to subsist.

"In all animals," says Cuvier, of whose high authority on physiological subjects I am always glad to avail

* Letter prefixed to Monro's *Comparative Anatomy*. London, 1744. (The sequel of the above passage deserves also to be consulted.)

myself, and whose indefatigable researches in comparative anatomy have shed a new blaze of light on the marks of systematical design in the animal kingdom) "in all animals the system of digestive organs has direct relations to the organs of motion and of sensation; for the structure and disposition of the digestive organs necessarily determine the kind of aliment proper for every species of animals; and it is obvious, that, if the senses and organs of motion in any species of animals be insufficient to distinguish and procure for them their proper aliment, that species of animals cannot subsist.

"Thus, animals who can digest nothing but flesh must, under the penalty of inevitable destruction, be able to discern their prey at a distance, to pursue it, to catch it, to get the better of it, to tear it to pieces. They must, therefore, possess a piercing eye, an acute sense of smell, swiftness in pursuit, address and force in the organs for catching their prey. Accordingly canine teeth, adapted to tear flesh, were never found in the same animal along with a hoof fit for supporting the weight of the body, but totally unqualified for laying hold of prey. Hence the rule that every hoofed animal is herbivorous; and as corollaries from this general principle, the maxims, that a hoofed foot indicates grinding teeth with flat surfaces, a long alimentary canal, a large stomach, and often more stomachs than one, with many other similar consequences.

"The same harmony subsists among the different parts of the system of organs of motion. As all the parts of this system act mutually, and are acted upon, especially when the whole body of the animal is in motion, the forms of all the different parts are strictly related. There is hardly a bone that can vary in its surfaces, in its curvatures, in its protuberances, without corresponding variations in other bones; and in this way a skilful naturalist, from the appearance of a single bone, will be often able to conclude, to a certain extent, with respect to the form of the whole skeleton to which it belonged." *

* Leçons d'Anatomie Comparée.
On these and various other instances of wise contrivance in the system of nature,

From the foregoing observations I hope it sufficiently appears that *design* may be inferred from its effects, and in particular, that design may be traced in various parts of the universe from an actual examination of the means which nature employs when she is evidently aiming at a certain end. I now proceed to consider more particularly the characters of this design as it is displayed in the universe; or, in other words, to consider how far the design seems to indicate wisdom, and whether it seems to operate in conformity to *one* uniform plan. The first inquiry is useful by its tendency to elevate our conceptions of the Supreme Being, and the second is necessary for the demonstration of his unity. The first inquiry may perhaps seem to some to be involved in the preceding reasonings, but the case is otherwise; for the words *design* and *wisdom* are by no means synonymous; and it is possible that a philosopher may grant that there are marks of *design* in the universe, who thinks but meanly of the *wisdom* displayed in its formation. This was the case with King Alphonso when he ventured to censure the planetary system (according to the conceptions which astronomers then entertained of it,) as a contrivance which admitted of important improvements. Distinct however as these two inquiries are, they have often been confounded by sceptical writers, who imagined that every little criticism they were able to make on the course of events, either in the physical or moral world, furnished an argument in favor of atheism.

I cannot help remarking, on the other hand, that the same distinction between *design* and *wisdom* has been overlooked by many of the excellent writers who have employed their genius in defending and illustrating the truths of natural religion. Of those who have speculated on the subject of final causes, the greater number seem plainly to have considered every new conjecture they were able to form concerning the ends and uses of the different objects composing the universe, and of the general laws by which its phenomena are regulated, as

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more particularly in the frame of animated beings, much valuable instruction may be derived from an *Essay on Final Causes* by the Honorable Robert Boyle.

an additional proof that it is not the work of chance or necessity; and to have imagined that the greater the number of such *ends* and *uses* they were able to trace, the more irresistible they rendered the evidences of design and intelligence. But it appears to me that the evidences of *design* in the universe are alike obvious to the savage and to the philosopher; and that they are much more forcibly impressed on the minds of those whose understandings have been perverted by sceptical sophistry, by *general* views of nature, than by examining her works in detail. Or if any person should think otherwise, it must at least be granted that *any one* organized and animated body furnishes just as complete evidence of this truth as could be obtained from the most accurate examination of all the different subjects of natural history. The proper use of such speculations is not to refute the atheist, but to illustrate the wisdom and the unity of design displayed in the material and moral worlds; or rather to enlighten and exalt our own understandings, by tracing with humility and reverence the operations of a wisdom which is infinite and divine. If there be any principle whatever which a philosopher is entitled to take for granted, it is certainly this, that there are marks of design in the objects around us and in our own frame; and to write large volumes in order to prove it is to offer an insult to human reason. In the observations, accordingly, which I have made on the subject, I have not thought it necessary for me to offer any positive evidences in support of this belief, but have only aimed at refuting the sceptical cavils by which some have attempted to weaken it. To those who had never read, or who were never likely to read, such metaphysical speculations as those of Mr. Hume, I should not have thought of addressing one metaphysical argument; satisfied as I am that disquisitions of this kind, however useful they may be in combating other disquisitions of a similar nature, can never add to the authority of the original laws of human belief. The science of abstruse learning I consider in the same light with an ingenious writer, who compares it to Achilles's spear, that healed the wounds it had made before. "It serves to repair

the damage itself had occasioned, and this is perhaps all it is good for. It casts no additional light upon the paths of life, but disperses the clouds with which it had overspread them before. It advances not the traveller one step in his journey, but conducts him back again to the spot from whence he wandered." *

I would not be understood by these remarks to detract from the merit of the authors to whom they refer. I only complain of the *form* in which they have presented their observations to the world, as demonstrations that a designing cause, or designing causes exist, and not as a humble attempt to display to those who are already impressed with this conviction, a few of those manifold indications of beneficent wisdom which the Author of all Things has been pleased for our instruction to place within the reach of our researches. Many of the observations which they have collected in the course of their inquiries are of inestimable value, but they have been frequently applied to an improper purpose, and hence very serious inconveniences have arisen. Among these inconveniences there are two of such magnitude that I think it of importance to state them explicitly.

1. The size and number of the publications in question have led superficial thinkers to imagine that the existence of God was a truth which required a multiplicity of proofs; and in consequence of this apprehension they have found their faith in it rather weakened than confirmed. While, on the other hand, those who were already convinced of this truth have turned aside with disgust from the perusal of so tedious a demonstration, leading to so obvious a conclusion. No expedient more effectual could have been devised for destroying that interest which the mind spontaneously takes in the details of natural philosophy and natural history, than to state them merely as premises subservient to the proof of the most incontestible of all propositions. Whereas, if the existence of an Intelligent Cause be taken for granted, and if we study his works not as *proofs* of *de-*

* Mr. Tucker, author of "The Light of Nature Pursued."

sign, but as manifestations of his wisdom, and revelations of his will, these branches of knowledge open inexhaustible sources of instruction and of delight to the mind. In the works of God we study the operations of his wisdom and goodness, as we study in the conduct and discourse of our fellow creatures the peculiarities of their genius and characters; and, in proportion as our knowledge extends, we find our acquaintance with the plans of his Providence become more intimate, and our conceptions of his nature more elevated and sublime.

2. When we accumulate a number of particular observations as proofs of the existence of an Intelligent Cause, we rest this important principle on a ground extremely open to the cavils of sceptics. In most cases, when we speculate concerning final causes, we are unable to do more than to suppose and to conjecture, and we are extremely apt, by indulging imagination too far, to bring ridicule on the cause we mean to support. Sometimes too it has happened that conjectures, which at first appeared extremely plausible, have been afterwards discovered to proceed on a misapprehension of facts. Such accidents never fail to furnish matter of triumph to the sceptic, as if the mistakes to which our limited faculties are liable in studying the works of God afforded any just ground for ascribing them to chance, or to an unintelligent necessity.* But if, on the other hand, we acquiesce in those evidences of design, which a *general* survey of nature affords to the most common observer, the mistakes we may commit in the subsequent examination of her works, will have no effect in suggesting doubts or scruples with respect to the truths of religion; but impressed with a firm conviction that nothing is made in vain, we will consider every difficulty

* Diderot seems to have thought, that *one* single defect in the universe in point of systematical order would conclude more strongly against the existence of the Deity, than all the relations yet observed among its different parts would prove in its favor. "La nature imite, en se jouant, dans cent occasions, les productions d'art; et l'on pourroit demander combien il faudroit remarquer de rapports dans un être, pour avoir une certitude complète qu'il est l'ouvrage d'un artiste. *En quelle occasion, un seul defaut de symmétrie prouveroit plus que toute somme donnée de rapports.*" (See the article *Beau* in the Encyclopédie.) This paradox is too extravagant to admit of a serious answer.

we meet with as a new lesson of humility to ourselves, and a new illustration of the unsearchable wisdom displayed in the universe.

I thought it proper to premise these general reflections to the remarks I am now to make, in order to point out the particular purpose to which I mean to apply them,—not as proofs that there exist designing and intelligent causes in nature, but as illustrations of that unity of design which connects together things the most remote and apparently insulated as parts of one system, and of that infinite wisdom which contrived and which superintends the whole.

A further purpose may perhaps be answered by some of these remarks, if I am only able to state them in such a manner as to rouse the attention to those wonders *around* us and *within* us, which are apt to lose their effect in consequence of long familiarity. "Assiduitate quotidianâ," says Cicero, "et consuetudine oculorum, assuescunt animi: neque admirantur, neque requirunt rationes earum rerum, quas semper vident: proinde quasi novitas nos magis quàm magnitudo rerum debeat ad exquirendas causas excitare." * And to the same purpose the poet:

> "Hunc solem et stellas et decedentia certis
> Tempora momentis, sunt qui formidine nullâ
> Imbuti spectent."

In such cases it is not necessary to teach men to *reason*, but to teach them to *attend;* to induce them to reflect on the objects and events which are daily presented to their view, and to listen to the natural suggestions of their own understandings. The supposition that Cicero quotes from Aristotle in speaking on this very subject is finely imagined. "Præclare Aristoteles, 'Si essent,' inquit, 'qui sub terrâ semper habitavissent, bonis et illustribus domiciliis, quæ essent ornata signis atque picturis, instructaque rebus iis omnibus, quibus abundant ii, qui beati putantur, nec tamen exissent umquam supra terram; accepissent autem famâ et auditione, esse quoddam numen et vim Deorum: deinde

* De Nat. Deor. II. 37.

aliquo tempore, patefactis terræ faucibus, ex illis abditis sedibus evadere in hæc loca, quæ nos incolimus, atque exire potuissent; cùm repentè terram et maria cœlumque vidissent; nubium magnitudinem, ventorumque vim cognovissent, adspexissentque solem, ejusque tum magnitudinem pulchritudinemque, tum etiam efficientiam cognovissent, quod is diem efficeret, toto cælo luce diffusâ; cum autem terras nox opacâsset, tum cœlum totum cernerent astris distinctum et ornatum, lunæque luminum varietatem, tum crescentis, tum senescentis, eorumque omnium ortus et occasus, atque in omni æternitate ratos immutabilesque cursus: hæc cum viderent, profectò et esse Deos, et hæc tanta opera Deorum esse arbitrarentur.'" *

The following considerations (the greater part of which I must content myself with barely mentioning) tend chiefly to illustrate the wisdom and unity of design manifested in the universe, from a view of the relations which different parts of nature bear to each other, and from the concurrence of things apparently unconnected and even remote, in promoting the same benevolent purposes.

(1.) Adaptation of the bodies and of the instincts of animals to the laws of the material world. Of the organs of respiration, for example, and of the instinct of suction to the properties of the atmosphere; of the sensibility of the eye to the *momentum* of light, and of the structure of that organ to the laws of refraction; of the size and strength of animals and vegetables to the laws of gravitation and of cohesion.

I mentioned in the first place, the adaptation of the organs of respiration, and of the instinct of suction to the properties of the atmosphere. On this *relation* some ingenious reflections occur in the excellent work of Dr. Paley, in which he has very properly laid great stress on the *period* when these organs were formed,—a period when no communication existed between the lungs and the atmosphere, and when, of course, their

* De Nat. Deor. II. 37.

structure bore a reference to an order of things which was yet FUTURE. The passage I allude to forms a part of Chap. 14, entitled, of Prospective Contrivances.

I mentioned *secondly*, the adaptation of the *retina* to the *momentum* of light, one of the most astonishing facts (I may venture to assert) that falls within the sphere of our observation. Nor will this assertion appear extravagant to those who reflect for a moment, on one hand, upon the structure of the organ, which is incomparably more delicate than that of any other part of the body; and, on the other hand, on the astonishing velocity of light which carries it at the rate of about *two hundred thousand miles in a second* of time; that is, nearly a *million* of times greater than the velocity of a cannon ball. How inconceivably small must its particles be, and how nicely must their quantity of matter be adjusted to their velocity to produce a momentum sufficient to affect the sensitive power of the retina without injuring *that* or any other part of the eye! How beautifully is the same organ adapted to that property of light, in consequence of which it alters its course when it passes obliquely from one medium into another of different density, insomuch that the course of the visual rays through the humors of the eye, till they paint the image on the retina, may be traced on the same dioptrical principles on which we explain the theory of the telescope and the microscope! This view of the mechanism of the eye appears more peculiarly striking, when we consider, as we just now did in the organs of respiration, the formation of the organ of sight in the womb of the mother, at a period when no communication exists between it and that element to which all its various parts have so manifest a reference.*

The last relation which I mentioned is that between the size and strength of animals and vegetables, and the laws of gravitation and cohesion. A very few slight remarks will suffice for the illustration of this instance of design, and of the inference which I wish to draw from the fact.

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* See Dr. Paley's Natural Theology, p. 277.

It is observed by Galileo, that in similar bodies, engines and animals, the greater are more liable to accident than the less, and have a less relative strength in proportion to their magnitude. A greater column, for example, is in much greater danger of being broke by a fall than a similar small one. A man is in greater danger from accidents of this kind than a child. To account for this he shows that in similar bodies of the same texture the force which tends to break them increases in the greater bodies in a higher proportion than the force which tends to preserve them entire. It is owing to this, he observes, that what succeeds very well in a model is often found to fall to pieces by its own weight when it comes to be executed on a larger scale. From these principles it follows that there are necessarily limits in the works both of nature and art which they cannot surpass in magnitude. It is possible to conceive trees of so great a size that their branches should fall by their own weight. The larger animals (we know from the fact*) have not strength in proportion to their size; and if their size were much increased they would not only be exposed to perpetual accidents, but would in a great measure lose their power of motion.†

Under this head, too, we may remark the relation which the size of the Human body bears to that of the other animals. There is a certain *common scale* on which man and the other animals that minister to his necessities seem to have been made, and which could not be departed from to any great extent without inconvenience; so that if the size of the human body were rendered either much larger or much smaller than it is, (that of other animals remaining the same) the beau-

* "In the large sized animals, such as the bull and the elephant, the thickness both of their bones and muscles bears a greater proportion to the length of their limbs, than in the smaller animals, and they are therefore of a less elegant form. But nature has not carried this so far as to compensate for the disadvantage arising from the increase of size; for the greater animals have not the same proportional strength in relation to their bulk that the smaller animals have. It has been computed, (Haller's Elem. Physiolog. Chap. ix. Sect. 2) that a flea can draw from seventy to eighty times its own weight, whereas a horse cannot with ease draw more than three times his own weight."—*Sir Gilbert Blane's Lect. on Muscular Motion.*

† Muschenbroek, Dissert. Phys. et Math. p. 560.

tiful harmony of the globe would be in so far disturbed.

"Had man been of a stature much less than he enjoys," says Sir Gilbert Blane in his Lecture on Muscular Motion, "he would not have possessed sufficient power over external objects to act up to those superior faculties of mind with which he is endowed. If nature had conferred on man only one half of his actual stature and strength, with the same powers of reason, we may venture to affirm that he would not have carried his dominion over the globe to the same extent. As he is now constituted, his force is commensurate with things external."

These remarks may serve as an answer to the following questions of *Lucretius.*

> "Denique cur homines tantos natura parare
> Non potuit, pedibus qui pontum per vada possent
> Transire, et magnos manibus divellere montes?"*

Indeed the same answer was long ago given to this question by an English naturalist of the seventeenth century, (Dr. Nehemiah Grew.) "No other cause," he observes, "can be assigned why a man was not made five or ten times bigger, but his *relation* to the rest of the universe."

(2.) Adaptation of the bodies and instincts of animals to those particular climates and districts of the earth for which they are destined.—Of this remark I cannot recollect a better illustration than the following description of the *camel* by Dr. Robertson.

"In the habitable parts of both Asia and Africa some of the most fertile districts are separated from each other by such extensive tracts of barren sands as seem to exclude the possibility of communication between them. In all these districts of Asia and Africa, where deserts are most frequent and extensive, the camel abounds. This is his proper station, and beyond this the sphere of his action does not extend far. He dreads alike the excesses of heat and cold, and does not agree even with the mild

* Lib. I. l. 200.

climate of our temperate zone. It is scarcely necessary for me to mention how beautifully this extraordinary animal is adapted to the particular station he occupies on the globe, by his persevering strength, by his moderation in the use of food, and by that singularity in his anatomical structure which enables him to lay in a stock of water sufficient for several days.—'In travelling through the desert,' says Mr. Volney, 'camels are chiefly employed, because they consume little and carry a great load. His ordinary burden is about seven hundred and fifty pounds. His food whatever is given him, straw, thistles, the stones of dates, bran, barley, &c. With a pound of food and as much water he will travel for weeks. In the journey from Cairo to Suez, which is forty or forty-six hours, they neither eat nor drink; but these long fasts if repeated often, wear them out. Their usual rate of travelling is very slow, hardly above two miles an hour. It is vain to push them, they will not quicken their pace; but if allowed some short rest they will travel fifteen hours a day.'" *

(3.) The relations which animals and vegetables bear to each other; the latter furnishing to the former salutary food in their healthful state, and useful remedies in the case of disease.

It will perhaps be said that these relations are the effect of accident; that the number of plants is infinite; and that it is not surprising that among this variety experience should discover to us a few which have certain relations to the animal kingdom. But admitting this mode of reasoning to be good, what shall we say to those instincts which, independently of experience, direct an animal to its proper food, and to those remedies which are suited to its various diseases? The former circumstance is matter of daily remark, and the latter is well known to be equally certain.

* Of the natural economy of this animal, (which the Arabians call the ship of the desert) and also of the mode in which he is trained by the art of man to his life of hardship and exertion, a particular account may be found in Buffon, Art. *Chameau et Dromadaire.*

(4.) The relations which different tribes of animals have to each other, one tribe being the natural prey of another, and each of them having their instruments of offence or defence provided accordingly.

(5.) The relations which the periodical instincts of migratory animals bear to the state of the season, and to such animal or vegetable productions in distant parts of the globe, as are destined to be their food.*

This view of the subject is peculiarly striking, when we consider the relations which almost all the parts of the universe bear to man. That our *faculties* are admirably adapted to our external circumstances has been often observed, particularly by Mr. Locke in the following passage:

"The infinitely wise Contriver of us, and of all things about us, hath fitted our senses, faculties, and organs to the conveniences of life, and to the business we have to do here. We are able by our senses to know and distinguish things, and to examine them so far as to apply them to our uses, and several ways to accommodate the exigencies of this life. We have insight enough into their admirable contrivances and wonderful effects, to admire and magnify the wisdom, power, and goodness of their Author. But it appears not that God intended we should have a perfect, clear, and adequate knowledge of them; that perhaps is not in the comprehension of any finite being. We are furnished with faculties (dull and weak as they are) to discover enough in the creatures to lead us to the knowledge of the Creator, and the knowledge of our duty; and we are fitted well enough with abilities to provide for the conveniences of living;—these are our business in this world. But were our senses altered and made much quicker and acuter, the appearance and outward scheme of things would have quite another face to us, and I am apt to think would be inconsistent with our being, or at least well-being, in this part of the universe which

* Ray, p. 128.

we inhabit. He that considers how little our constitution is able to bear a remove into parts of this air, not much higher than that we commonly breathe in, will have reason to be satisfied that in this globe of earth allotted for our mansion, the all wise Architect has suited our organs, and the bodies that are to affect them, one to another. If our sense of *hearing* were but one thousand times quicker than it is, how would a perpetual noise distract us; and we should in the quietest retirement be less able to sleep or meditate than in the middle of a sea fight. Nay, if that most instructive of our senses, *seeing*, were in any man a thousand, or a hundred thousand times more acute than it is now by the best microscope, things several millions of times less than the smallest object of his sight now, would then be visible to his naked eyes, and so he would come nearer the discovery of the texture and motion of the minute parts of corporeal things, and in many of them probably get ideas of their internal constitutions; but then he would be in a quite different world from other people,—nothing would appear the same to him and others,—the visible ideas of every thing would be different; so that I doubt whether he and the rest of men could discourse concerning the objects of sight, or have any communication about colors, their appearances being so wholly different; and perhaps such a quickness and tenderness of sight could not endure bright sunshine, or so much as open day light, nor take in but a very small part of any object at once, and that too only at a very near distance. And if, by the help of such microscopical eyes, (if I may so call them) a man should penetrate further than ordinary into the secret composition and radical texture of bodies, he would not make any great advantage by the change, if such an acute sight would not serve to conduct him to the market and exchange, if he could not see things he was to avoid at a convenient distance, or distinguish things he was to do with, by those sensible qualities others do. He that was sharp-sighted enough to see the configuration of the minute particles of the spring of a clock, and observe on what peculiar structure and impulse its elastic

motion depends, would no doubt discover something very admirable; but if eyes so framed could not view at once the hand and the characters of the hour plate, and thereby discover at a distance what o'clock it was, their owner could not be much benefited by that acuteness, which, whilst it discovered the secret contrivance of the parts of the machine, made him lose its use." *

Nor is it merely our perceptive faculties which have a reference to our situation. The external objects with which we are surrounded are so accommodated to our capacities of enjoyment, and the relations which exist between our frame and that of external nature are so numerous, in comparison of what we perceive in the case of other animals, as to authorize us to conclude, that it was chiefly with a view to our happiness and improvement that the arrangements of this lower world were made. The subject is so infinite that I should lose myself if I attempted any illustration of it. I shall content myself with mentioning the innumerable relations between our senses, and the natural objects with which we are surrounded; between the smell and the perfumes of the vegetable world; between the taste and the endless profusion of luxuries which the earth, the air, and the waters afford; between the ear and the melodies of the birds; between the eye and all the beauties and glories of the visible creation. There is something I think peculiarly remarkable in the adaptation of the music of birds to the human ear. It seems to give pleasure to none of the quadrupeds; nor is it even certain if the music of one species of birds gives pleasure to another; for it has been asserted by some late naturalists,† that those of them who are most remarkable for their powers of imitation, (the linnet for example) are as apt to imitate sounds which are harsh and disagreeable as the most exquisite tones of music. But man receives pleasure from them all, and the variety of their notes would seem almost to have been bestowed on them to form a concert for the gratification of his ear.

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* Locke's Works, vol. ii. p. 15, *et seq.*

† Particularly by the late Honorable Daines Barrington.

"Up springs the lark,
Shrill voiced and loud, the messenger of morn;
Ere yet the shadows fly, he mounting sings
Amid the dawning clouds, and from their haunts
Calls up the tuneful nations. Every copse
Deep tangled, tree irregular, and bush
Bending with dewy moisture, o'er the heads
Of the coy quiristers that lodge within,
Are prodigal of harmony. The thrush
And woodlark, o'er the kind contending throng
Superior heard, run through the sweetest length
Of notes; when listening Philomela deigns
To let them joy, and purposes in thought
Elate, to make her night excel their day.
The blackbird whistles from the thorny brake,
The mellow bulfinch answers from the grove;
Nor are the linnets, o'er the flowery furze
Pour'd out profusely, silent. Join'd to these
Innumerous songsters, in the fresh'ning shade
Of new sprung leaves, their modulations mix
Mellifluous. The jay, the rook, the daw,
And each harsh pipe, discordant heard alone,
Aid the full concert, while the stock-dove breathes
A melancholy murmur through the whole."

Some naturalists have taken notice, as a curious circumstance, of that instinct which attracts the different tribes of singing birds to the habitations of men. If there is a cottage in a forest they all assemble in its neighbourhood. A very ingenious author, M. de St. Pierre, tells us that he travelled more than six hundred leagues in the forests of Russia without seeing any small birds, except in the neighbourhood of the villages. He mentions likewise, that when he was in Russian Finland he sometimes travelled twenty leagues in a day without meeting either with villages or birds. Wherever they perceived the latter they were sure that they were near an inhabited country. Garcilaso de la Vega informs us, that his father, having been detached from Peru with a company of Spaniards to make discoveries beyond the Cordilleras, was in danger of perishing from hunger amidst their valleys and quagmires, till at last he perceived a flight of parrots, which made him suspect that he was near the habitations of men. He accordingly followed the direction in which they flew, and came at last, after incredible hardships, to an Indian settlement.

It has also been observed that the musical powers of which I have been speaking are confined to the birds which inhabit the fields and the woods. They would have been thrown away on those tribes which frequent the ocean, not only as they are removed from the ordinary haunts of men, but as the songs which are the most pleasing to the ear would have been lost amid the noise of that turbulent element. Such birds have in general a piercing scream, by which they are enabled to make themselves mutually heard, notwithstanding the noise of the wind and waters.*

There is another view of nature, which tends remarkably to illustrate that unity of design in the universe which is the foundation of our belief of the unity of God; to trace the *analogies* which are observable in the structure of different tribes of animals, and even between the animal and the vegetable kingdom; or to trace the *analogy* which is observable among many of the laws of nature in the material world.

(1.) Of the analogy in the anatomical structure of different tribes of animals, the following passage of Buffon contains a very pleasing illustration.

"Take the skeleton of a man, incline the bones of the pelvis, shorten those of the thighs, legs, and arms; join the phalanges of the fingers and toes; lengthen the jaws by shortening the frontal bones; and lastly, extend the spine of the back. This skeleton would no longer represent that of a man, it would be the skeleton of a horse. For by lengthening the back bone and the jaws the number of the vertebræ, ribs, and teeth would be increased, and it is only by the number of these bones, and by the prolongation, contraction, and junction of others, that the skeleton of a horse differs from that of a man. The ribs which are essential to the figure of animals are found equally in men, in quadrupeds, in birds, in fishes, and even in the turtle. The foot of the horse, so apparently different from the hand

* Les Etudes de la Nature, &c. Tom. III. p. 70.

of man, is composed of similar bones, and at the extremity of each finger we have the same small bone resembling the shoe of a horse which bounds the foot of that animal. Raise the skeletons of quadrupeds, from the ape kind to the mouse, upon their hind legs, and compare them with the skeleton of a man, the mind will be instantly struck with the uniformity of structure and design observed in the formation of the whole group. This uniformity is so constant, and the gradations from one species to another are so imperceptible, that to discover the marks of their discrimination requires the most minute attention. Even the bones of the tail will make but a slight impression on the observer. The tail is only a prolongation of the *os coccygis*, or rump bone, which is short in man. The ourang outang and true apes have no tail, and in the baboon and several other quadrupeds the tail is exceedingly short. Thus, in the creation of animals, the Supreme Being seems to have employed only one great idea, and at the same time to have diversified it in every possible manner, that man might have an opportunity of admiring equally the magnificence of the execution, and the simplicity of the design." *

(2.) A further instance of the same unity of design occurs in the analogy between the animal and the vegetable kingdoms. It is sufficient to mention this without any comment, as it has been matter of common remark in all ages of the world, and has furnished to poets many of their most interesting and agreeable images. In modern times it has attracted the attention of some of our most eminent philosophers, who have not only availed themselves of its assistance as a principle of botanical classification, but have connected it with some very curious speculations concerning the order and economy of nature.

(3.) To all this we may add the analogy among many of the phenomena and laws of the material world;

* Smellie's Translation of Buffon's Natural History.

a satisfactory proof of which may be derived from the effects which philosophical habits and scientific pursuits have in familiarizing the mind to the order of nature, and in improving its penetration and sagacity in anticipating those parts of it which are yet unknown. A man conversant with the phenomena of physics and chemistry is much more likely than a stranger to these studies to form probable conjectures concerning those laws of nature which still remain to be examined. There is a certain *style* (if I may use the expression) in the operations of the Great Author of all Things; something which every where announces, amidst a boundless variety of detail, an inimitable unity and harmony of design; and in the perception of which, what we commonly call *philosophical sagacity* seems chiefly to consist. It is this which bestows an inestimable value on the conjectures and queries of such a philosopher as Sir Isaac Newton.

This view of *the unity of design* displayed in the works of creation becomes more peculiarly impressive when we consider that evidences of it may be traced as far as the inquiries of philosophers have hitherto reached. The ancients in general supposed that the phenomena of the heavens were regulated by laws perfectly unlike those which obtain within the circle of our experience, although I have somewhere met with the following maxim, which I think was ascribed to the Persian Magi—*συμπαθῆ εἶναι τὰ ἄνω τοῖς κάτω.*

The modern discoveries have shown clearly that this really is the case; and indeed it was a conjecture *a priori* that this probably was true, that led the way to the doctrine of gravitation. Every subsequent discovery has confirmed and extended the truth. It has been found that comets in their most distant excursions from the sun continue subject to this law, and that, by attending to the various disturbances of their motions arising from their gravitation to the planets, the periods of their return to the planetary regions may be predicted within astonishingly narrow limits. It has been found that the same law extends to that telescopical planet which has been lately discovered to belong to

our system, and the quantity of matter it contains has been computed from the motion of its satellites by an application of a theory founded on the most familiar of all the facts we know, that a heavy body on our earth when projected into the air descends again to the ground.

Nor is it only the more general laws of terrestrial bodies which extend to the more remote parts of the universe. There is some ground for suspecting that the particular arrangements of things on the surfaces of the different planets are not wholly unlike those which we observe on our own. I before took notice of that relation which the size and strength of animals and vegetables seem to bear to the laws of gravitation and cohesion. Supposing, then, the other planets to be furnished with animals and vegetables similar to those on the surface of our earth, and supposing at the same time the same laws of cohesion and of other attractions which obtain here to extend over our system, it was necessary that the force of gravity at the surfaces of the different planets should not differ very widely from one standard. Now, as we find from the fact, contrary to all expectation, that at the surfaces of the planets which differ from each other the most in magnitude, there is a wonderfully narrow limit within which the force of gravity varies, is it not a natural inference that they are fitted for the accommodation of animated beings not very different from those with which we are acquainted? At the surface of Jupiter, though he be several hundred times greater than our earth, the force of gravity is little more than double of that of terrestrial bodies; and at the surface of Saturn it is only about one fourth greater than at the surface of the earth.*

Amusing and interesting as these physical speculations may be to the mind, it is still more delightful to trace that uniformity of design which obtains in the moral world. To compare the arts of human life with the instincts of the brutes, and the instincts of the different tribes of brutes with each other; and to remark,

* Maclaurin's Account of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophical discoveries, B. iii. ch. 5. § 5.

amidst the wonderful variety of means which are employed to accomplish the same ends, a certain analogy characterize them all; or to observe in the minds of different individuals of our own species the workings of the same affections and passions, manifesting among men of every age and of every country the kindred features of humanity. It is this which gives the great charm to what we call *nature* in epic and dramatic compositions; when the poet speaks a language to which every heart is an echo, and which, amidst all the effects of education and fashion in modifying and disguising the principles of our constitution, reminds all the various classes of readers or of spectators of the existence of those moral ties which unite us to each other, and to our common Parent.

I have only to add further, before leaving this subject, that the various remarks and reasonings which I have offered on the two general principles of our nature formerly mentioned, are not to be considered as forming any part of the argument for the existence of God, which, as I already said, is an immediate and necessary consequence of these principles. What I had in view was, not to confirm this important truth by reasoning, but to obviate the sceptical cavils which have been raised against it. When the principles of our nature are allowed to follow their own course without being diverted from it by the prejudices of superstition or of false philosophy, they produce their proper effect on the mind of the uncultivated savage, as much as of the enlightened citizen. "How do you know," said a traveller to a poor Arab of the desert, "that there is a God?"—"In the same manner," he replied, "that I trace the footsteps of an animal by the prints which it leaves upon the sand."—"Is it not fitting," said a savage of Sumatra to his companion, showing him a watch that had been made in Europe, "that a people such as we should be the slaves of a nation capable of forming such a machine? The sun," he added, "is a machine of the same nature."—"And who winds him up?" said his companion.—"Who," replied he, "but Allah!" *

* Marsden's History of Sumatra.

If any exception to the universality of these religious impressions among mankind is to be found, it is not among savages we are to look for it, but in populous and commercial and artificial societies of men, where the voice of nature is drowned amid the bustle of business, or the hurry of dissipation; where our earliest and most susceptible years are passed among the productions of human art, and the attention is diverted from those physical appearances, which are stamped with the obvious marks of Divine power and wisdom. Nothing, in truth, banishes moral impressions from the thoughts so much as the artificial objects with which we are every where surrounded in populous and cultivated countries, particularly in large commercial cities; because the curiosity is too deeply engrossed by the productions of human skill and industry to have leisure to follow its *natural* direction. Hence it is that such impressions, however long banished from the mind, never fail to revive when we retire from the haunts of men to converse with nature in solitude. What we call the *love of nature* is in fact the love and admiration of the Deity. The enthusiasm with which some men survey the endless vicissitudes which the spectacle of the universe exhibits, is nothing else than the devotional temper moderated and repressed by the slight veil which sensible objects interpose between us and their author. In those deep and savage recesses where human art has never trod, this veil is in some measure removed; every thing around us appears unchanged and fresh from the hand of the Creator, and we seem to be conscious of his more immediate presence.

" PRÆSENTIOREM et conspicimus Deum
Per invias rupes, fera per juga,
Clivosque præruptos, sonantes
Inter aquas, nemorumque noctem;
Quam si repôstus sub trabe citreâ
Fulgeret auro, et Phidiacâ manu.

SECTION III.

Conclusion of the Argument for the Existence of God.

THE observations which have been made not only establish the *existence* of a Deity, but contain the evidences of his unity, of his power, and of his wisdom. Of these we justly say that they are *infinite;* that is, that our imagination can set no bounds to them, and that our conceptions of them always rise in proportion as our own faculties are cultivated and enlarged, and as our knowledge of the universe becomes more extensive. Some of the earlier and more scholastic of our modern writers on natural religion give a long enumeration of what they call the *Divine Attributes*, which they divide into *the natural, the intellectual, and the moral.* Under the first head, they comprehend the unity of the Deity, his self-existence, his spirituality, his omnipotence, his immutability, his eternity; under the second, his knowledge and his wisdom; and under the third, his justice and his goodness; and of all these attributes they treat in a systematical manner. I own I do not approve of this view of the subject; or at least I do not think I could adopt it with advantage here; I shall therefore confine myself to a few observations on the evidences of the *Divine goodness and justice*, those attributes which render the Deity the proper object of religious worship and adoration.

Before, however, entering on this subject, I think it proper to take notice of the historical question concerning the priority of monotheism or of polytheism, in the order of human investigation. I shall afterwards collect together a few miscellaneous remarks which in the course of this chapter escaped my recollection while treating of those heads under which they ought to have been introduced. For the sake of greater distinctness I shall divide the section into two parts.

PART I.

With respect to the priority of Monotheism or Polytheism, two opinions on the question have been propos-

ed. The one supposes *monotheism* to be agreeable to the first suggestions of the mind, and *polytheism* to result from a combination of the conclusions formed by different persons in different situations. The other supposes polytheism to arise necessarily from those partial conceptions of the universe, to which our faculties are limited in the infancy of reason and experience, and monotheism to be the slow and gradual result of more enlarged and philosophical views. The former opinion is supported by Mr. Ferguson, in his "Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy;" the latter by Mr. Hume, in his "Natural History of Religion."

"In every nation or tribe," says Ferguson, "The providence of God was supposed to take its character from the circumstances in which it was employed. In maritime situations the Deity was conceived as monarch of the sea, and director of storms. Within land he was conceived as the patron of husbandmen and of shepherds, the ruler of seasons, and the power on which man must depend for the increase of his herds, and for the returns of his harvest.

"In no instance, perhaps, did the people of any one description or determinate manner of life originally conceive more than one God. But the accounts of what different nations believed, when collated together, seemed to make up a catalogue of separate deities; and what every nation apart intended for one, when reports were accumulated from different quarters, was mistaken for many.

"The spirit with which these reports of a God acknowledged in one nation, different from the God who was acknowledged in another, were mutually received by their respective votaries, was various in different instances.

"In some instances the pretensions of one Deity were supposed to be consistent with those of another, and the Gods reconcilable. Upon this supposition every nation worshipped its own, without any supposed disparagement to the God of its neighbour, and without animosity to his worshippers.

"In other instances pretensions were considered as

inconsistent; deities were stated as rival powers; and nations waged continual war under the banners of their respective gods." *

On the other hand, it is maintained by Hume, (and I confess I think with much more probability) that theism is the slow result of philosophical views of the universe—connecting different physical events together as parts of *one* system conspiring to *one* end; and that as long as we attend to detached and insulated appearances only, polytheism offers itself as the most natural creed; leading men to apprehend *one* God of the winds, another of the waters, a third of the woods, &c. presiding over and communicating motion to the different parts of the material world. The prevalence of polytheism in the world is a proof of this; and I have little doubt that this would have continued to be the religion of the multitude in all countries, had not the idolatrous tendency of the uninformed understanding been corrected by the light of Divine revelation.†

When I speak, however, of the prevalence of polytheism in the world, I would be always understood to mean its prevalence among the *multitude;* for it is more than probable, that in all ages and countries there have been *some* individuals whose minds were enlightened by the simple and sublime belief of the unity of God. Thus, among the ancient Greeks and Romans, although the established religion and the popular persuasion was undoubtedly polytheism, the clearest evidence may be produced that the philosophical creed was very different. The most enlightened writers indeed frequently express-

* Vol. I. p. 169.

† Two very high authorities, however, may be quoted in favor of the opposite opinion, Sir Isaac Newton and Sir William Jones. "The primeval religion of *Iran*," says the last of these writers, "was that which Newton calls the *oldest* (and it may justly be called the noblest) of all religions; a firm belief that one Supreme God made the world by his power, and continually governed it by his providence; a pious fear, love, and adoration of him; a due reverence for parents and aged persons; a fraternal affection for the whole human species; and a compassionate tenderness even for the brute creation."—*Jones's Dissertation on the Persians.*

Does not the purity and sublimity of this creed, both in its theological and ethical principles, suppose a degree of cultivation, both intellectual and moral, altogether incompatible with the condition of man in the earlier stages of society? The passage, however, is nobly conceived, and beautifully expressed, and contains, I have little doubt, a faithful description of the religious sentiments of many wise and good men in the heathen world.

ed themselves in conformity to vulgar prejudices; and many of them probably *believed* that there exist a variety of beings superior to man, who have an influence over human affairs, but who act in subordination to the will of the Supreme God. This belief is not to be confounded with polytheism; for it is perfectly consistent with the doctrine of the unity of the Deity to suppose that he sometimes acts by subordinate ministers. The frequent application which the classical writers make of the word *Deus* is apt to mislead us upon this subject; but that word conveyed to the Romans a very different idea from what we annex to the corresponding word in our language. Sometimes they employed it to express the Supreme Being; sometimes subordinate minds acting in obedience to his will. In the following sentence it is used in both these senses. "*Deos* alios in terrâ, alios in lunâ, alios in reliquas mundi partes spargens, *Deus* quasi serebat." *

That the unity of the Deity was the philosophical belief among the Romans, appears from the testimony of their most eminent writers. The following passages are from the works of Cicero.

"Princeps ille Deus, qui omnem hunc mundum regit, sicut animus humanus id corpus cui præpositus est." †
"Nec vero Deus ipse alio modo intelligi potest, nisi mens soluta quædam et libera, segregata ab omni concretione mortali, omnia sentiens et movens." ‡ "Esse præstantem aliquam æternamque naturam, et eam suspiciendam admirandamque hominum generi, pulchritudo mundi ordoque rerum cœlestium cogit confiteri." § "Omnes gentes una lex, et sempiterna et immortalis, continebit; unusque erit, quasi magister et imperator omnium, Deus." ‖

Seneca expressly informs us that all the different names given by the Romans to the Deity were only to be considered as descriptive of the different characters in which he appears to us from his works. "Quid aliud est Natura, quam Deus et Divina Ratio toti mundo et partibus ejus inserta? Quoties voles, tibi licet aliter

* Cicero quoted by Bolingbroke. Phil. Works, Vol. V. p. 264.
† Somnium Scip. § 3. ‡ Tusc. Quæst. Lib. i.
§ De Divin. Lib. ii. ‖ Frag. Lib. iii. De Repub.

hunc auctorem rerum nostrarum compellare; et Jovem illum optimum et maximum ritè dices, et tonantem et statorem. Hunc eundem et fatum si dixeris, non mentieris; nam cum fatum nihil aliud sit quam series implexa causarum, ille est prima omnium causa ex quâ cæteræ pendent. Quæcunque voles illi nomina proprie aptabis, vim aliquam affectumque cœlestium rerum continentia: tot appellationes ejus possunt esse, quot munera;" * and in another place; "Ne hoc quidem crediderunt (antiqui), Jovem, qualem in Capitolio et in cæteris ædibus colimus, mittere manu fulmina; sed eundem, quem nos, Jovem intelligunt: custodem rectoremque universi; animum ac spiritum, mundani hujus operis dominum et artificem; cui nomen omne convenit." †

I shall only add to these passages the following quotation from the Isis and Osiris of Plutarch. "Care should be taken not to transform, dissolve, and scatter the Divine Nature into rivers, winds, vegetables, or bodily forms and motions. This would be as ridiculous as to imagine that the sails, the cables, the rigging, and the anchor, are the pilot; or that the thread, the shuttle, and the woof, are the weaver. Such senseless notions are an indignity to the heavenly powers, whom they blaspheme, while they give the name of Gods to beings of an insensible, inanimate, and corruptible nature."—"Nothing that is without a soul, nothing that is material, and to be perceived by our senses, can be God. Nor yet must we imagine that there are different Gods, according to the different countries of Greeks and barbarians, northern and southern nations. As the sun is common to all the world, though called by different names in different places, so there is but one sole Supreme Mind or Reason, and one and the same Providence that governs the world, though he is worshipped under different names, and has appointed some inferior powers for his ministers."

Nor is it only the *philosophers* of antiquity who thought in this manner. It is justly observed by the Chevalier

* De Ben. Lib. iv. Cap. 7. † Nat. Quæst. Lib. ii. Cap. 45.

Ramsay, that "whoever reads Homer and Virgil with a proper attention will see, that, notwithstanding the wild flights of their imagination, and the indecent allegories by which they sometimes dishonor the Divine Nature, there is one general principle running through all their fables, that there is one Supreme God, whom they every where call the Father, and the Sovereign Lord of Gods and Men, the Architect of the World, and the Prince and Governor of the Universe."—"Poetry," says this author, "deifies all the various parts of nature, and gives spirits to bodies, as well as body to spirits. It expresses the operations and properties of matter by the actions and passions of such invisible powers as the pagans supposed to be directors of all the motions and events that we see in the universe. The poets pass in a moment from allegory to the literal sense, and from the literal sense to allegory; from real Gods to fabulous deities; and this occasions that jumble in their images, that absurdity in their fictions, and that indecorum in their expressions, which are so justly condemned by the philosophers. Notwithstanding, however, this multiplication of inferior deities, the poets of antiquity in general believed that there is but one only Supreme God." Of this assertion very strong proofs are produced by Ramsay in his discourse on the Theology of the Pagans, annexed to his *Travels of Cyrus*. The following passages deserve to be added to those he has quoted.

"Accipite ergo animis; atque hæc mea figite dicta,
Quæ Phœbo Pater omnipotens, mihi Phœbus Apollo
Prædixit, vobis Furiarum ego maxima pando." *

Upon which verses *Servius* remarks, that even Apollo (he who among the pagan deities was in chief esteem for his prophetic knowledge) is said to derive his knowledge from the Supreme Being. "Notandum Apollinem, quæ dicit, à Jove cognoscere."

"Scimus ut impios
Titanas, immanemque turmam
Fulmine sustulerit caduco,
Qui terram inertem, qui mare temperat
Ventosum; et urbes, regnaque tristia;

* Æneid. III.

Divosque, mortalesque turmas,
Imperio regit UNUS æquo." *

"Quid prius dicam solitis parentis
Laudibus; qui res hominum ac deorum,
Qui mare et terras, variisque mundum
Temperat horis?

"Unde nil majus generatur IPSO:
Nec viget quicquam simile, aut secundum:
Proximos ILLI tamen occupavit
Pallas honores." †

The most remarkable passage, however, I recollect in any of the ancient poets for my present purpose, is that in Lucan's Pharsalia, where the following lines are put into the mouth of Cato, in reply to Labienus and others, who advised him to consult the oracle of Jupiter Ammon in Lybia.

"Hæremus cuncti superis, temploque tacente,
Nil facimus non sponte Dei. Nec vocibus ullis
Numen eget; dixitque semel nascentibus auctor,
Quidquid scire licet. Sterilesne elegit arenas,
Ut caneret paucis, mersitque hoc pulvere verum?
Estne Dei sedes, nisi terra, et pontus, et aër,
Et cœlum, et virtus?—Superos quid quærimus ultra?
Jupiter est quodcumque vides, quocumque moveris." ‡

In further confirmation of this doctrine, concerning the religious opinions of the ancient philosophers, a very ingenious (and to my mind most convincing) argument is deduced by Dr. Cudworth from the reasonings of the *Epicurean school*, which, as he observes, were levelled, *not* against the supposition of a plurality of Deities, but against the belief of *one* Supreme God, every where present, and every where exerting the active energy of a superintending providence.

"Quis regere immensi summam, quis habere profundi
Indu manu validas potis est moderanter habenas?
Quis pariter cœlos omnes convertere? et omnes
Ignibus ætheriis terras suffire feraces?
Omnibus inque locis esse omni tempore præsto?"

"In like manner," continues Dr. Cudworth, "when

* Hor. Od. Lib. iii. Carm. 4.
† Hor. Lib. i. Od. 12.
‡ Lib. ix. l. 573.

Epicurus pursues the same argument further in Cicero, alleging, that, though such a thing were possible, yet it would be, notwithstanding, absolutely inconsistent with the happiness of any being, he still proceeds on the same hypothesis of one sole and single Deity."— "As Epicurus here speaks singularly," says Cudworth, "so the trouble of this theocracy could not be thought so very great to a multitude of coordinate Deities, when parceled out among them, but would rather seem to be but a sportful and delightful divertisement to each of them. Wherefore," concludes this very learned and profound writer, "it is manifest that such an idea as we have declared of the unity of God is a thing which the ancient atheists, under the times of paganism, were not unacquainted with, but principally directed their force against it." *

I must not leave this fundamental article of Natural Religion, (the existence of the Deity) without taking notice of the support it derives from the universal consent of all ages and nations. However contaminated with error, however debased by the follies of superstition and credulity, the belief of the existence of supernatural and invisible beings presiding over human affairs will be found to be inseparable from the human mind; and, in so far as this belief obtains, atheism is excluded. "Ex tot generibus," says Cicero, "nullum est animal, præter hominem, quod habeat notitiam aliquam Dei: ipsisque in hominibus nulla gens est neque tam immansueta, neque tam fera, quæ non, etiamsi ignoret qualem habere Deum deceat, tamen habendum sciat." † Now unquestionably the universal concurrence of mankind in the belief of any proposition is a strong presumption, or rather a positive evidence, that this belief has a foundation in the principles of our nature; and if we find these natural suggestions of the mind confirmed by the authority of the most enlightened philosophers, and above all confirmed by the conclusions of our own reason, we have all the evidence that possibly can be brought in support of any truth what-

* Intellect. System, pp. 207, 208. † Lib. i. De Legibus, 8.

ever. Indeed I apprehend there is no truth in the whole circle of human knowledge which so many different kinds of proof conspire to establish, as that which has been now under our consideration:—"Testimonium populorum atque gentium," says Lactantius, "in unâ hac re non dissidentium:"—and in this manner reasoned the best philosophers of old. "What seems true to *most* wise men," as Aristotle has excellently observed, "is very probable; what most men, both wise and unwise, assent to, doth still more resemble truth; but what men generally consent in hath the highest probability, and approaches near to demonstration, so near that it may pass for ridiculous arrogance, or for intolerable obstinacy and perverseness to deny it."—"A man," he adds, "may assume what seems true to the wise, if it do not contradict the common opinion of mankind." *

The following passages are extracted from different writers of antiquity. They all express the same idea, the presumption for the existence of the Deity arising from universal consent. But on a subject of so interesting a nature it is pleasing to place the same truth in various lights, as well as to remark a coincidence of sentiment among those enlarged and cultivated minds which have devoted their talents to the improvement and happiness of the human race.

"Multum dare solemus," says Seneca, "præsumptioni omnium hominum; apud nos veritatis argumentum est aliquid omnibus videri; tanquam Deos sic esse colligimus, quod omnibus de Diis opinio insita est; nec ulla gens usquam est adeo extra leges moresque projecta, ut non aliquos Deos credat." †

To the same purpose Cicero: "Firmissimum hoc afferri videtur, cur Deos esse credamus, quod nulla gens tam fera, nemo omnium tam sit immanis, cujus mentem non imbuerit Deorum opinio. Multi de Diis prava sentiunt; id enim vitioso more effici solet: omnes tamen esse vim et naturam Divinam arbitrantur. Unâ autem in re consensio omnium gentium lex naturæ putanda est." ‡

* Arist. Top. I. 8. † Sen. Ep. 117. ‡ Tusc. I. 13.

In the following passage of Maximus Tyrius, the fact on which the argument proceeds is stated with great simplicity and force.

"In such a contest and tumult and disagreement (*about other matters of opinion*) you may see this one law and speech acknowledged by common accord, that there is one God, the King and Father of All, and many Gods, the children of God and ruling together with him. This the Greek says, and this the barbarian says; and the inhabitant of the continent, and the islander, and the wise and the unwise." *

"If you search the world," says Plutarch, "you may find cities without walls, without letters, without kings, without money; but no one ever saw a city without a Deity, without a temple, or without some form of worship."

In the passages now quoted their several authors take for granted that the general consent of mankind in admitting any proposition affords a strong presumption that the proposition is true. And that this is a just principle of reasoning appears (among various other considerations) from this, that "truth is *one* thing, while errors are numberless, and every man has a different one." I select this consideration in preference to the others, because the remark is made by Mr. Hume himself, the most sceptical of all writers. When we find, therefore, a number of unconnected individuals, all led to the same conclusion by different processes of reasoning, the presumption that the conclusion is true is strengthened in a proportion indefinitely great; and in like manner, when among an infinite variety of discordant systems that have arisen in different ages and countries, we find some opinions common to them all, we are inevitably led to consider these opinions as possessing the highest evidence by which any truth can possibly be supported. We may add to this observation, that when among an infinite variety of rites and ceremonies we trace universally the operation of certain common affections and emotions, we have a demonstration that

* See Barrow's Sermons.

these affections and emotions form the constituent part of the nature of man.

I am aware of an objection that may be stated to this doctrine, that there are some articles of belief universally received by mankind in ages of ignorance, which come to be generally regarded as mere prejudices in the progress of human reason. Such, for example, is the belief that the earth is at rest, and the sun in motion; * and in general all those prejudices called by Lord Bacon *Idola Tribûs*. It may be supposed, therefore, that, for any thing we know to the contrary, the case may one day be the same with our belief of the existence of a Deity.

In answer to this objection I would observe, that wherever a prejudice is found to obtain universally among mankind in any stage of society, this prejudice must have some foundation in the general principles of our nature, and must proceed upon some *truth* or *fact* inaccurately apprehended, or erroneously judged of. The suspense of judgment, therefore, which is proper with respect to particular opinions till they are once examined, can never justify scepticism with respect to the general principles or laws of the human mind. Our belief of the sun's motion is not a conclusion to which we are fairly led by any such principle or law, but an inference rashly drawn from the perceptions of sense, which do not warrant such an inference. All that we see is, that there is a relative change of place between us and the sun; and this fact which is made known to us by our senses, no subsequent discovery of philosophy pretends to disprove. It is not therefore the evidence of external perception which is overturned by the Copernican system, but *a judgment* or inference of the understanding, of the rashness of which every person must be fully sensible the moment he is made to reflect with due attention on the circumstances of the case. In other words, the Copernican system not only informs us of the real constitution of the universe, but satisfies us with respect to the *grounds* of this universal prejudice; and

* See Trembley sur les Préjugés, p. 21.

the doctrine which it substitutes for our first crude conclusions on the subject is founded, not on any process of reasoning *a priori*, but on the demonstrable inconsistency of these conclusions with the various phenomena which our perceptions present to us. Had Copernicus, like some of the sophists of old, not only asserted the stability of the earth, but that no such thing as *motion* exists in the universe, his theory would have been perfectly analogous to that of Berkeley, and no answer to it could have been devised more pertinent and philosophical than that which Plato is said to have given to the same paradox in the mouth of Zeno, by rising up and walking before his eyes. We are entitled, therefore, to dispute the similarity of the cases, till some prejudice is pointed out as universal as the belief of the existence of a Deity, from which prejudice such a belief could have arisen.

Another objection to the argument for the existence of a Deity drawn from universal consent is founded on absurd tenets and extravagant ceremonies sanctioned by the religious creeds of all ages and nations. "Examine," says Mr. Hume, "the religious principles which have prevailed in the world, you will scarcely be persuaded that they are any thing but sick men's dreams; or perhaps will regard them more as the playsome whimsies of monkeys in man's shape, than the serious, positive, dogmatical asseverations of a being who dignifies himself with the title of rational."—"To oppose the torrent of scholastic religion by such feeble maxims as these; that it is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be; that the whole is greater that a part; that two and three make five; is pretending to stop the ocean with a bulrush." And hence this ingenious writer finds himself obliged to conclude, that "the whole is a riddle, an enigma, an inexplicable mystery, and that doubt, uncertainty, and suspense appear the only result of our most accurate scrutiny on this subject."

In a former work I attempted to reply to Mr. Hume's reasonings on this head, and even endeavoured to deduce from the circumstances on which he founds his objections a new argument for the being of a Deity;

inasmuch as the absurd tenets and extravagant ceremonies which men are taught to reverence when they are connected with their religious belief, prove how irresistible the evidence must be of that fundamental principle, by means of which they lay hold of the understanding and the heart.* And it was in this manner, I apprehend, that Lord Bacon felt, when he said that He "had rather believe all the fables in the Legend, and the Talmud, and the Alcoran, than that this universal frame is without a mind." Or, in other words, that there was no proposition, how absurd soever, to which he could not more easily *give* his assent, than he could *withhold* it from this truth, proclaimed to him at once by every part of the universe.

To one who considers the subject in this light, the history even of the errors and follies of superstition becomes interesting and instructive, and instead of justifying the suggestions of scepticism, throws a new lustre on the evidences of religion; and, while it teaches him to regard not only with indulgence, but with reverence, whatever tenets and observances are sanctified to other men by all the best feelings of the heart, it cherishes in his own mind that pure and undefiled religion which worships God in spirit and in truth.

SECTION III.

PART II.

I FORMERLY mentioned some circumstances which may help to explain why the idea of a God, although it forces itself irresistibly on every serious and reflecting mind, is so seldom presented to our thoughts when we are engaged in the necessary business of human life. This idea, I observed, is the result of two principles of our nature,—the one of which is, that every thing which begins to exist must have a cause;—the other, that a combination of means conspiring to a particular end

* Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, vol. i. pp. 366, 367, 368, 369. Sixth Edit.

implies intelligence. Now the former of these principles, although it plainly intimates to us (on an accurate analysis of the conceptions it suggests) the constant operation of *mind* in producing the phenomena of the universe, yet it does not call our attention to this efficiency of mind when we are employed about our ordinary occupations. On the contrary, the attention is diverted from such apprehensions by a very remarkable bias of our nature, which leads us to associate power and efficiency with material objects and physical events; and to consider the phenomena of the universe as a chain of causes and effects, the links of which are necessarily connected with each other.* Another important purpose is answered by this bias of the mind, as it serves to animate our curiosity in the investigation of physical causes, particularly in the earlier part of our existence. The curiosity which children discover is, I think, *chiefly* a confused desire to know the efficient causes of the phenomena they see; and although their curiosity in this respect is never gratified, yet it serves to increase their stock of useful knowledge, by directing their attention to *physical* causes, and to the general laws of nature.

In order to prevent still further that inconvenient distraction of our thoughts which would necessarily result from the constant apprehension of the agency of mind, the changes in the state of the universe are in general accomplished by slow and imperceptible degrees. If an animal or a vegetable were brought into existence before our eyes in an instant of time, the event would not in itself be more wonderful than their gradual growth from an embryo or seed to maturity. But, on the former supposition, there is no man who would not perceive and acknowledge the immediate agency of an intelligent cause; whereas, according to the actual order of things, the effect steals so slowly on our observation that it excites little or no curiosity, excepting in those who are possessed of a sufficient degree of reflection to contrast the present state of the objects they see with the first origin and progressive stages of their existence.

* See upon this subject Philosophy of the Human Mind, vol. i. Chap. I. § 2.

With respect to the other principle, which leads us to apprehend *intelligence* and *design* whenever we see a combination of means conspiring to a particular end, the effects of familiarity formerly remarked produce such habits of inattention in the greater part of mankind as prevent it from making any sensible impression on their minds on the ordinary occasions of human life. Were it not for these effects of familiarity the business of the world would appear unworthy of our regard, and we should be every moment in the same state of astonishment and of awe, as if (according to the supposition of Aristotle and of Cicero, already mentioned) we were suddenly introduced to a view of the magnificent spectacle of the earth and the heavens after having passed the earlier part of our lives in a cavern under ground.

In general, it would appear to have been the intention of the Deity to make known his existence and attributes to every mind that makes a proper use of its faculties, without obtruding these sublime conceptions on the thoughtless and inconsiderate, or withdrawing the attention even of the serious from the necessary pursuits of business. The consequence is, that the Deity is never an immediate object of human perception, but is recognised by the deliberate exercise of our reason in the incessant workings of his wisdom and power, as our feeble sight, unable to gaze directly at the splendor of the sun, enjoys the milder influence of his rays when reflected from the verdure of the woods or the flowers of the field.

Beside these circumstances in the constitution of the human mind which conceal the Deity from the view of those whose thoughts are wholly engrossed by sensible objects, and by the pursuits of this world, there are some particular habits of life that are in a peculiar degree unfavorable to religious impressions; above all, those artificial habits to which we are accustomed in large and populous cities, where we are surrounded wholly with the effects of human skill and human industry. These lay hold of the curiosity in our early years, and divert it from the beautiful and sublime spectacle of the universe. Of such modes of thinking and feeling,

atheism, (or what amounts nearly to the same thing) a total insensibility to all religious and moral impressions, is the genuine offspring; and in proportion as the manners of a people recede from the simplicity of natural occupations and pursuits, and acquire the superinduced habits either of commercial drudgery or of fashionable life, this miserable perversion of the understanding and the heart may be expected to prevail.* The scepticism which has long vitiated the philosophy, and injured the morals of a neighbouring country, may be traced in some degree at least from this very cause. The *Abbé de Lille* complains, in his preface to the translation of the Georgics, of the difficulty of the work, from those ideas of meanness and poverty which the French are accustomed to associate with the profession of husbandry;—and the same thing has been experienced by those who have attempted to translate the *Seasons of Thomson* into that language. How perverted from all the purposes of our being must have been a state of manners, in which those rural scenes and occupations which to our English poets form the most favorite subjects of description, were considered as incompatible with the elegance and dignity of poetical expression; and where ideas of meanness and wretchedness were associated with the primitive and the only *essential* occupation of man; that occupation in which alone he associates his exertions with the bounty of Providence, who (as Franklin has beautifully observed) "blesses the labors of the husbandman by a continued miracle wrought in his favor, as a reward for his innocent life and virtuous industry."

* There is, I think, some ingenuity as well as wit in the following note, by an Italian translator of Horace, on the Epicurean principles sported by the city mouse, in his conversation with his country friend.

"Quid te juvat, inquit, amice,
Prærupti nemoris patientem vivere dorso?
Vis tu homines urbemque feris præponere silvis?
Carpe viam, (mihi crede,) comes: terrestria quando
Mortales animas vivunt sortita, neque ulla est
Aut magno aut parvo lethi fuga: quo, bone circa,
Dum licet, in rebus jucundis vive beatus:
Vive memor, quam sis ævi brevis."

"Jucundum quidem est urbanum audire murem Epicuri de animi interitu propugnare sententiam. Ergone tanta erit urbium pravitas, ut mures etiam atheismum urbe profiteantur?"—*Horace's Satires and Art of Poetry translated into Italian verse, with Notes.* Milan, 1784.

SECTION IV.

Digression with respect to the Use and Abuse of the Speculation concerning Final Causes in Philosophical Inquiries.

THE objections against the speculation concerning Final Causes which have been hitherto under our consideration have been urged with the avowed design of invalidating the argument *a posteriori* for the existence of God. Another objection, however, still remains to be examined, which, although it has been frequently insisted on by authors who were far from wishing to favor the cause of atheism, it is of importance for us to obviate as completely as possible, before bringing the present argument to a conclusion, on account of its tendency to weaken that species of evidence on the subject which is most level to the apprehension of ordinary men. The objection I allude to is founded on the supposed incompetency of the human faculties to penetrate the designs of Providence, and on the consequent impiety and presumption of indulging ourselves in conjectures concerning the operations of infinite wisdom. Descartes has insisted much on this idea, and has carried it so far as to reject altogether such speculations from philosophy. "Let us never found any of our reasonings concerning physical phenomena on *the ends* which we may imagine God or nature had in view in the constitution of the universe; for this obvious reason, that we ought not to indulge so great a degree of arrogance as to suppose ourselves privy to the divine counsels; but, considering God as the *efficient cause* of all things, we shall see whatever conclusions the light of reason enables us to form from that knowledge of his attributes which he has been pleased to enable us to attain." *—"And for this reason alone I am of opinion that the whole of this speculation concerning *final causes* is altogether useless, because I do not think, that, without rashness, we can presume to investigate the designs of God." † Some observations much to the same purpose are to be found in the works of Maupertuis and of Buffon.

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* Princip. Pars i. § 28. † Meditatio Quarta.

To this class of observations against final causes, a most satisfactory answer is given by Mr. Boyle in an Essay written expressly on the subject. The great merits of this excellent person as an experimental philosopher are universally known; but I do not think that his general philosophical views have attracted so much notice from his successors as they ought to have done. They appear to me to be uncommonly comprehensive and just, and to bear marks of a mind no less fitted for metaphysical and moral pursuits than for physical researches. In the work to which I refer at present, we find a pleasing union of philosophical depth with that exalted piety which formed a distinguished feature in the author's character. The world he considered (as he tells us himself) "as the temple of God, and man as born the *priest of nature*, ordained (by being qualified) to celebrate Divine Service, not only *in* it, but *for* it." With these views he could not fail to be irritated at the attempts made by Descartes to explode his favorite speculation concerning final causes; and the remarks he has made in reply to him contain a complete refutation of all that has been since advanced with a like view by Maupertuis and Buffon. His reasonings on this subject extend to so great a length that it is impossible to quote them here in the author's own language; and I am unwilling to weaken their force by an imperfect abstract. I must therefore content myself with extracting one of his remarks, from which the principal scope of his essay may be easily collected.

"Suppose that a countryman, being in a clear day brought into the garden of some famous mathematician, should see there one of those curious gnomonic instruments that show at once the place of the sun in the zodiac, his declination from the equator, the day of the month, the length of the day, &c. &c. it would indeed be presumption in him, being unacquainted both with the mathematical disciplines, and the several intentions of the artist, to pretend or think himself able to discover *all the ends* for which so curious and elaborate a piece was framed; but when he sees it furnished with a style, with horary lines and numbers, and manifestly perceives

the shadow to mark from time to time the hour of the day, it would be no more a presumption than an error in him to conclude, that (whatever other uses the instrument was fit or designed for) it is a sun dial, that was meant to show the hour of the day." *

The essay of Mr Boyle now referred to appears to me to be sufficient to vindicate the investigation of final causes so far as it is subservient to the proof of a Deity. At the same time, I am ready to acknowledge that it is a speculation extremely liable to be abused, and which should always be conducted with modesty and diffidence. I acknowledge also that it has sometimes been introduced into natural philosophy in a manner which has led physical inquirers astray from the proper objects of their science. The Peripatetics, in particular, have been justly accused of blending final and physical causes together, and substituting conjectures concerning the ends which nature had in view for an explanation of her operations. I make this observation at present, as it furnishes me with an opportunity of vindicating Lord Bacon from the charge of a tendency to atheism, which was first brought against him by Cudworth, and has been repeated by some modern sceptics who wished to justify their own aversion to the speculation about final causes by Bacon's authority.

The passage to which Cudworth objects is as follows: "Incredibile est quantum agmen idolorum philosophiæ immiserit, naturalium operationum ad similitudinem actionum humanarum reductio." † "If," says Cudworth, "the advancer of learning here speaks of those who unskilfully attribute their own properties to inanimate bodies, (as when they say that matter desires forms as the female does the male, and that heavy bodies descend down by appetite towards the centre that they may rest therein) there is nothing to be reprehended in the passage. But if his meaning be extended further to take away all final causes from the things of nature,

* In the same Essay Mr. Boyle has offered some very acute and judicious strictures on the abuses to which this research is liable, when incautiously and presumptuously pursued.

† "It is incredible what a host of prejudices have been introduced into philosophy by a disposition to liken natural operations to the actions of men."

then it is the very spirit of atheism and infidelity. It is no idol of the cave or den, (to use that affected language) that is, no prejudice or fallacy imposed on ourselves from the attributing our own animalish properties to things without us, to think that the frame and system of this whole world was contrived by a perfect understanding and mind." †

In this passage the very learned author seems to have lost sight of his usual candor; and indeed I think it impossible that such expressions could have escaped him, if he had had the patience to peruse the whole of Bacon's writings, for there is no author, ancient or modern, who lies less open to any charge of scepticism. "I had rather believe," says he in one of his essays, "all the fables in the Legend, and the Talmud, and the Alcoran, than that this universal frame is without a mind. It is true that a little philosophy inclineth man's mind to atheism; but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion; for while the mind of man looketh upon second causes scattered, it may sometimes rest in them and go no further; but when it beholdeth the chain of them confederate and linked together, it must needs fly to Providence and to Deity. Nay, even that school which is most accused of atheism doth most demonstrate religion, that is, the school of Leucippus, and Democritus, and Epicurus. For it is a thousand times more credible that four mutable elements, and one immutable fifth essence, duly and eternally placed, need no God, than that an army of infinite small portions, or seeds unplaced, should have produced this order and beauty without a Divine Marshal."

The real state of Bacon's opinion about final causes was plainly this, that the consideration of them was not properly a part of natural philosophy, but of metaphysics, or of natural theology; and that it was safer (at least for our physical inquiries) that they should be kept as distinct as possible from all other sciences; a caution which, although not so necessary in the present age, was highly useful in his time, in consequence of

† Page 680, 1st. Edit.

the absurd mixture of physical and final causes which occur in the writings of the Peripatetics, who then possessed an almost unlimited influence over the opinions of the learned. That he did not mean to censure the speculation about final causes when confined to its proper place, and applied to its proper purpose, appears from the following passage :—

" The second part of *metaphysics* is the investigation of *final causes*, which I object to, *not* as a speculation which ought to be omitted, but as one which is generally introduced out of its proper place, by being connected with *physical* researches. If this were merely a fault of arrangement, I should not be disposed to lay great stress upon it; for arrangement is useful chiefly as a help to illustrate, and does not form an essential object in science. But in this instance a disregard to *method* has occasioned the most fatal consequences to philosophy, inasmuch as the consideration of *final* causes in physics has supplanted and banished the study of *physical* causes, the fancy amusing itself with unsubstantial explanations derived from the former, and diverting the curiosity from a steady prosecution of the latter." After illustrating this remark by various examples, Lord Bacon adds,—" I would not, however, be understood by these observations to insinuate, that the final causes just mentioned may not be founded on truth, and in a *metaphysical* view extremely worthy of attention ; but only, that when such disquisitions invade and overrun the appropriate province of *physics*, they are likely to lay waste and ruin that department of philosophy." The whole passage concludes with these words. " And so much concerning *metaphysics ;* the part of which relating to *final causes* I do not deny may be met with as a subject of discussion, both in physical and in metaphysical treatises. But while in the latter of these it is introduced with propriety, in the former it is altogether misplaced ; and *that* not merely because it violates the rules of a just order, but because it operates as a powerful obstacle to the progress of inductive science."

This passage, while it refutes in the most satisfacto-

ry manner the charge brought against Bacon by Cudworth, contains some very just remarks on the improper application made by the Peripatetics and their followers, of the speculation concerning final causes,—an abuse which they carried so far as to justify Bacon, in a work expressly destined to illustrate the true method of inquiry in physics, to propose the complete rejection of that speculation from natural philosophy.

In the present age, when the true method of philosophizing is pretty generally understood, and when philosophers seem more in danger of going wrong in natural theology than in natural philosophy, it does not appear to me to be so necessary as formerly to banish final causes from physics, provided always they are kept distinct from physical causes, with which they are scarcely in any danger (in the present state of science) of being confounded. What harm can possibly result from the natural philosopher's remarking those instances of design which fall under his review in the course of his inquiries? Or if it should be considered as foreign to *his* province to speak of *design*, he may at least be permitted to remark what *ends* are really accomplished by particular means, and what advantages are derived by man from the general laws by which the phenomena of nature are regulated. In doing this, he only states a *fact;* and if it be improper for him to go further, he may leave the inference to the moralist or to the divine.

In consequence, however, of the vague and common place declamation against the use of final causes in physics, countenanced by those detached expressions of Bacon, which have suggested the foregoing reflections, it has become fashionable among philosophers to omit the consideration of them entirely, as a speculation inconsistent with the genuine spirit of inductive science; a caution (it may be remarked by the way) which is the most scrupulously observed by those writers who are the most forward to remark every apparent *anomaly* or *disorder* in the economy of the universe. The effect of this has been to divest the study of nature of its most attractive charms, and to sacrifice to a false

idea of logical rigor all the moral impressions and pleasures which it is fitted to yield; and even, when the most striking accommodation of means to an end force themselves upon the mind, to take no notice of such facts in their physical speculations. Nay, what is worse, those writers who are the most forward to remark every apparent irregularity in the universe never fail to remind us (if at any time we seem to be struck with appearances of order and of wisdom) that the consideration of *final causes* is altogether exploded by that inductive philosophy which Bacon recommended, and to which we are indebted for the sublime discoveries of Newton and his followers. Indeed, this scholastic phrase has become so obnoxious, that it were to be wished it could be laid aside, and some simpler mode of speaking, such as *ends* or *uses*, substituted instead of it. In the mean time, it may contribute to smooth the way for such a change in phraseology to employ indiscriminately these different terms as synonymous and convertible expressions.

To this we may add, that there are some parts of nature which we cannot be said to understand as philosophers, without the consideration of *uses*. This is remarkably the case in the study of anatomy. To know the structure of the body of an animal we must not only examine the conformation of the parts, but we must consider their *functions*, and in what way they conspire to the preservation and health of the animal.* I am inclined to think that it is by means of the consideration of *uses* that the principal anatomical discoveries have been made. Every anatomist in his inquiries proceeds upon the maxim, that nothing in the body of an animal was made in vain; and when he meets with something, the use of which is not obvious, he feels himself dissatisfied till he discovers some at least of the purposes to which it is subservient. We have one remarkable instance of this recorded by Mr. Boyle.

"I remember that when I asked our famous Harvey, in the only discourse I had with him, (which was but a lit-

* Consult on this subject a paper by Dr. John Wallis, and another by Dr. Tyson in the Philosophical Transactions, No. 269. For a short account of them see Philosophical Transactions, (from 1700 to 1720) abridged, Vol. V. p. 1, *et seq.*

tle while before he died) what were the things which induced him to think of a circulation of the blood? He answered me, that when he took notice that the valves in the veins of so many parts of the body were so placed, that they gave free passage to the blood towards the heart, but opposed the passage of the venal blood the contrary way, he was invited to think that so provident a cause as nature had not placed so many valves without design, and no design seemed more probable than that since the blood could not well, because of the interposing valves, be sent by the veins to the limbs, it should be sent through the arteries, and return through the veins, whose valves did not oppose its course that way." *

In general, it may be observed that those philosophers who have been most successful in detecting the secrets of nature have been men strongly impressed with the general idea of prevailing order and of benevolent design; and I have no doubt that this impression contributed greatly to enlighten their views and to guide their investigations. It is remarked by Dr. Priestley, (a writer whose opinion on *this* question is of great value, from the signal success of his own experimental inquiries) "that, as true philosophy tends to promote piety, so a generous and manly piety is reciprocally subservient to the purposes of philosophy; for while we keep in view the great FINAL Cause of all the parts and the laws of nature, we have a clue by which to trace the efficient cause." To the same purpose Priestley quotes the following remark of Hartley in his *Observations on Man.* "Since this world is a system of benevolence, and consequently its Author the object of unbounded love and adoration, benevolence and piety are our only true guides in our inquiries into it, the only keys which will unlock the mysteries of nature, and clues which lead through her labyrinths. Of this all branches of natural philosophy and natural history afford abundant instances. In all these inquiries let the inquirer take it for granted previously that every thing is right, and the best that

* Boyle's Works, Vol. IV. folio, p. 539. For some remarks on this anecdote by the late celebrated anatomist, Dr. William Hunter, see Philosophy of the Human Mind, vol. ii. pp. 487, 488. Third Edition.

can be *cæteris manentibus;* that is, let him with a pious confidence seek for benevolent purposes, and he will be always directed to the right road, and after a due continuance in it attain to some new and valuable truth: Whereas every other principle of examination being foreign to the great plan on which the universe is constructed, must lead into endless mazes, errors, and perplexities." *

Having said so much about the research of final causes in physics, I shall subjoin a few reflections on its application to the Philosophy of the Human Mind; a science in which the just rules of investigation are as yet far from being completely understood. Of this no stronger proof can be produced than the confusion between final and efficient causes which still prevails in the writings of our most eminent moralists. The same confusion, as I have already observed, may be traced in the *physical* theories of the schoolmen; but since the time of Bacon it has been so completely corrected, that, in the wildest hypothesis of the eighteenth century, hardly a vestige of it is to be found.

To the logical error just mentioned it is owing that so many false accounts have been given of the principles of human conduct, or of the motives from which our actions proceed. When the general laws of our constitution are attentively examined, they will be found to have for their object the happiness and improvement both of the individual and of society. This is their *final* cause, or the end for which we may presume they were destined by our Maker. But in such cases it seldom happens, that, while man is obeying the active impulses of his nature, he has any idea of the ultimate ends he is promoting, or is able to calculate the remote effects of those little wheels which he puts into motion. These active impulses may therefore in one sense be considered as the *efficient* causes of his conduct; inasmuch as they are the means employed to determine him to a particular course of action, and as they operate, at least in the first instance, without any reflection on *his* part on the ends to which they are subservient. Philosophers, however,

* Preface to Priestley's History of Electricity.

have in every age been extremely apt, when they had discovered the salutary tendency of any principle of action, to conclude that the principle derived its origin from a sense of this tendency. Hence have arisen the theories which attempt to account for all our actions from self-love, and also those which would resolve the whole of morality into views of utility.

I do not know of any author who has been more completely aware of this common error than Mr. Smith, who, in his Theory of Moral Sentiments, always treats separately of the *final* causes of the different principles he considers, and of the *mechanism* (as he calls it) by which nature accomplishes the effect. The following profound remarks show sufficiently the opinion he had of the great importance of attending to the distinction between them.

"In every part of the universe we observe means adjusted with the nicest artifice to the ends which they are intended to produce, and in the mechanism of a plant or animal body admire how every thing is contrived for advancing the two great purposes of nature, the support of the individual, and the propagation of the species. But in these, and in all such objects, we still distinguish the efficient from the final cause of their several motions and organizations. The digestion of the food, the circulation of the blood, and the secretion of the several juices which are drawn from it, are operations all of them necessary for the great purposes of animal life, yet we never endeavour to account for them from those purposes, as from their efficient causes; nor imagine that the blood circulates, or that the food digests of its own accord, with a view or intention to the purposes of circulation or digestion. The wheels of the watch are all admirably adapted to the end for which it was made, the pointing of the hour. All their various motions conspire in the nicest manner to produce this effect. If they were endowed with a desire and intention to produce it, they could not do better. Yet we never ascribe any such intention or desire to them, but to the watchmaker; and we know that they are put into motion by a spring, which intends the effect it produces as little as they do. But, though, in accounting for the operations of bodies,

we never fail to distinguish in this manner the efficient from the final cause, in accounting for those of the mind we are apt to confound these two different things with one another. When by natural principles we are led to advance those ends which a refined and enlightened reason would recommend to us, we are very apt to impute to that reason, as to their efficient cause, the sentiments and actions by which we advance those ends, and to imagine that to be the wisdom of man which in reality is the wisdom of God. Upon a superficial view this cause seems sufficient, and the system of human nature seems to be more simple and agreeable when all its different operations are in this manner deduced from a single principle." *

These observations point out very plainly the errors to which we are exposed in moral inquiries by our disposition to confound together efficient and final causes. But it does not therefore follow, that even in such inquiries the consideration of final causes is to be rejected. On the contrary, this very author (as I already hinted) has frequently indulged himself in speculations concerning them, and seems plainly to have considered them as important objects of philosophical research, no less than *efficient*, (or, as I would rather call them, *physical*) causes. The only caution to be observed is, that the one may not be confounded with the other.

Between these two different researches, however, there is a very intimate connexion. In many cases the consideration of final causes has led to the discovery of some general law of nature, (as in the instance of the circulation of the blood already mentioned) and in almost every case the discovery of a general law points out to us clearly some wise and beneficent purposes to which it is subservient. And it is the prospect of such applications that chiefly renders the investigation of general laws interesting to the mind.

Among the philosophers of antiquity no one seems to have entertained juster notions on this subject than Socrates! "After many other fruitless attempts he had made

* Theory of Moral Sentiments, Vol. I. p. 218.

in his youth to see into the causes of things, happening to hear that Anaxagoras taught that all things were governed by a supreme mind, and being mightily pleased with this principle, he had recourse to his writings, full of expectation to see the whole scheme of nature explained from the perfect wisdom of an all governing mind, and to have all his doubts about the perfection of the universe satisfied. But he was much disappointed when he found that Anaxagoras made no use of this sovereign mind in his explications of nature, and referred nothing to the order and perfection of the universe as its reason, but introduced certain aërial, etherial, and aqueous powers, and such incredible principles for the causes of things. Upon the whole, Socrates found that this account of nature was no more satisfactory than if one who undertook to account for the actions of Socrates should begin with telling us that Socrates was actuated by a principle of thought and design; and pretending to explain how he came to be sitting in prison at that time when he was condemned to die by the unjust and ungrateful Athenians, he should acquaint us that the body of Socrates consisted of bones and muscles; that the bones were solid and had their articulations, while the muscles were capable of being contracted and extended, by which he was enabled to move his body and put himself in a sitting posture; and after adding an explanation of the nature of sound, and of the organs of the voice, he should boast at length that he had thus accounted for Socrates sitting and conversing with his friends in prison, without taking notice of the decree of the Athenians, and that he himself thought it was more just and becoming to wait patiently for the execution of their sentence, than escape to Megara or Thebes, there to live in exile. 'T is true," says he, "that without bones and nerves I should not be able to perform any action in life; but it would be an unaccountable way of speaking to assign those for the reasons of my actions, while my mind is influenced by the appearance of what is best." *

* See Maclaurin's View of Newton's Philosophy.—The above is a short abridgment of the reasonings of Socrates in the Phædon of Plato.

The authority of Socrates, however, cannot be expected to have much weight with natural philosophers in the present age of the world. That of Sir Isaac Newton will not be disputed on a question relating to the spirit of that inductive philosophy, of which his writings afford the most perfect and most successful exemplification hitherto given to the world. This great man (as we are told by his intimate friend Mr. Maclaurin) used sometimes to observe, "that it gave him particular pleasure to see how much his philosophy had contributed to promote an attention to final causes, after Descartes and others had attempted to banish them." Mr. Maclaurin, too, (whose acquaintance with the just rules of philosophizing will not be denied) has remarked "that of all sorts of causes final causes are the most clearly placed in our view; and that it is difficult to comprehend why it should be thought arrogant in us to attend to the design and contrivance that is so evidently displayed in nature, and obvious to all men; to maintain, for instance, that the eye was made for seeing, though we may not be able either to account mechanically for the refraction of light in the coats of the eye, or to explain how the image is propagated from the retina to the mind."

It was before observed, with respect to anatomists, that all of them, without exception, whether professedly friendly, or hostile, to the inquisition of final causes, concur in availing themselves of its guidance in their physiological researches. A similar remark will be found to apply to other classes of scientific inquirers. Whatever their speculative opinions may be, the moment their curiosity is fairly engaged in the pursuit of truth, either physical or moral, they involuntarily, and often perhaps unconsciously, submit their understandings to a logic borrowed neither from the schools of Aristotle nor of Bacon. The ethical system of those ancient philosophers who held that *virtue consists in following nature*, not only involves a recognition of the doctrine of final causes, but represents the study of them, in as far as regards the ends and destination of our own being, as the great business and duty of life; *Quid*

sumus, et quidnam victuri gignimur. The system, too, of those physicians who profess to follow nature in the treatment of diseases, by watching and aiding her *medicative powers*, assumes the truth of the same doctrine as its fundamental principle. A still more remarkable illustration, however, of the influence which this species of evidence has over the mind, even when we are the least aware of its connexion with metaphysical conclusions, occurs in the speculations of the French economists.

The very title of *physiocratie*, by which some of them distinguished their system, affords a sufficient proof of their own ideas concerning its characteristical spirit and tendency; and the same thing is more fully demonstrated by their frequent recurrence to the physical and moral laws of nature as the unerring standard which the legislator should keep in view in all his positive institutions. "Ces lois," says Quesnay, "forment ensemble ce qu'on appelle *la loi naturelle.* Tous les hommes et toutes les puissances humaines doivent être soumis à ces lois souveraines, instituées par l'Etre Suprême: Elles sont immuables et irrefragables, et les meilleures lois possibles; et par conséquent la base du gouvernement le plus parfait, et la règle fondamentale de toutes les lois positives; car les lois positives ne sont que des lois de manutention relatives à l'ordre naturel évidemment le plus avantageux au genre humain." I do not speak at present of the *justness* of those opinions; I wish only to remark, that, in the statement of them given by their original authors, it is assumed as a truth self-evident and indisputable, not merely that benevolent design is manifested in all the physical and moral arrangements connected with this globe, but that the study of these arrangements is indispensably necessary to lay a solid foundation for political science.

The same principles appear to have led Mr. Smith into that train of thinking which gave birth to his inquiries concerning National Wealth. "Man," he observes in one of his oldest manuscripts now extant, "is generally considered by statesmen and projectors as the materials of a sort of political mechanics. Projectors disturb nature in the course of her operations in hu-

man affairs; and it requires no more than to let her alone, and give her fair play in the pursuit of her own designs." And in another passage: "Little else is requisite to carry a state to the highest degree of opulence from the lowest barbarism, but peace, easy taxes, and a tolerable administration of justice; all the rest being brought about by the natural course of things. All governments which thwart this natural course, which force things into another channel, or which endeavour to arrest the progress of society at a particular point, are unnatural, and to support themselves are obliged to be oppressive and tyrannical." Various other passages of a similar import might be quoted both from his Wealth of Nations and from his Theory of Moral Sentiments.

This doctrine of Mr. Smith's and of Quesnay's, which tends to simplify the theory of legislation by exploding the policy of those complicated checks and restraints which swell the municipal codes of most nations, has now, I believe, become the prevailing creed of thinking men all over Europe; and, as commonly happens with prevailing creeds, has been pushed by many of its partizans far beyond the views and intentions of its original authors. Such, too, is the influence of fashion on the one hand, and of obnoxious phrases on the other, that it has found some of its most zealous abettors and propagators among writers who would reject, without a moment's hesitation, as superstitious and puerile, every reference to *final causes* in a philosophical discussion.*

* See Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, vol. ii. Chap. iv. Sect. 6.

CHAPTER THIRD.

PRELIMINARY INQUIRY INTO THE PRINCIPLES OF NATURAL RELIGION.

OF THE MORAL ATTRIBUTES OF THE DEITY.

THE observations made in the last article contain some of the principal heads of the argument for the existence of God, and also for his unity, for his power, and for his wisdom. Of the two last of these attributes, we justly say that they are *infinite;* that is, that our conceptions of them always rise in proportion as our faculties are cultivated, and as our knowledge of the universe becomes more extensive. The writers on natural religion commonly give a particular enumeration of attributes, which they divide into the natural, the intellectual, and the moral; and of which they treat at length in a systematical manner. This view of the subject, whatever may be its advantages, could not be adopted with propriety here. The remarks which follow are confined to the evidences of the Divine goodness and justice; those attributes which constitute the moral perfections of the Deity, and which render him the proper object of religious worship.

In applying to the Deity the phrase *moral attributes*, I express myself in conformity to common language; but the object of the following speculations will be better understood when I say, that the scope of my reasonings is to show, in the first place, that there are evidences of *benevolent design* in the universe; and secondly, that there are evidences of a moral government exercised over man by means of *rewards and punishments;* or, in other words, that the constitution of the human mind, and the course of human affairs, prove that the reward of virtue, and the punishment of vice, is the aim of the general laws by which the world is governed.

SECTION I.

Of the Evidences of Benevolent Design in the Universe.

In entering on this subject we may lay it down as a fundamental principle, that our ideas of the moral attributes of God must be derived from our own moral perceptions. It is only by attending to these that we can form a conception of what his attributes are; and it is in this way we are furnished with the strongest proofs that they really belong to him.

In the course of our inquiries into the principles of morals, it formerly appeared that the power of distinguishing *right* from *wrong* is one of the most remarkable circumstances which raise man above the brutes; and indeed, I apprehend, it is chiefly *this* modification of *reason* we have in view, when we employ that word to express the exclusive characteristic of the human race among the various inhabitants of the globe. I endeavoured further to show, that to *act* in conformity to this sense of rectitude is the highest excellence which man is capable of attaining; insomuch, that, in comparison of *moral* worth, the most splendid intellectual endowments appear insignificant and contemptible. Nor do these ideas apply only to our own species. I before showed that the constitution of our nature determines us to conceive the distinction between right and wrong as eternal and immutable; not as arising from an arbitrary accommodation of our frame to the qualities of external objects, like the distinction between agreeable and disagreeable tastes or smells, but as a distinction necessary and essential, and independent of the will of any being whatever,—analogous in this respect to that between mathematical truth and falsehood. We are justified, therefore, in drawing inferences from our own moral judgments with respect to the moral administration of the Deity, on the same ground on which we conclude that what appears to us to be demonstrably true must appear in the same light to all other intelligent beings. And as moral worth is the highest excel-

lence competent to our own nature, we are justified in ranking moral excellence among those attributes of God which more peculiarly claim our love and adoration.*

But not to insist on this metaphysical view of the subject, it is evident, that, if we believe that we have derived our existence from the Deity, we must ascribe to him, in an infinite degree, all those powers and perfections which he has communicated to us, or which he has rendered us capable of acquiring. From our own imperfect *knowledge* we must ascribe to him *omniscience;* from our limited *power* we must ascribe to him *omnipotence;* and, *a fortiori*, from our moral perceptions we must ascribe to him unerring moral rectitude, and goodness unbounded towards his whole creation.

In opposition to this mode of reasoning, sceptics have frequently urged the impropriety of forming a deity after our own image; and have represented the argument I stated for the moral attributes of God as arising from the same illusion of the imagination which leads the vulgar to ascribe to him the human form and organs of perception analogous to our own. But the comparison is by no means just. There is obviously a wide distinction between the possession of a power and the being limited to the exercise of that power in a particular way. The former is always a perfection, the latter is a mark of an imperfect and dependent being. Thus the possession of knowledge is a perfection, and we may venture to ascribe it in an infinite degree to the Deity; but it would be rash in us, from what we experience in ourselves, to conclude that the Deity investigates truth by those slow processes of deduction which are suited to the weakness of the human faculties. In like manner, although it would be absurd to suppose that the Deity hears and sees in a way analogous to what we experience in ourselves, we *may* without impiety conclude, nay, we *must* from the fact believe, that he possesses in an infinite degree of perfection all our powers of perception, because it is from him that we have received them. "He that made the eye shall he not see?

* On this subject see Cudworth, Intel. System, p. 204.

He that made the ear shall he not hear?"—Not indeed by means of bodily organs similar to ours, but in some way far above the reach of our comprehension.

The argument which these considerations afford for the great and important truth I wish to establish at present is irresistible. Moral excellence appears obviously to constitute the chief perfection of the human mind; and we cannot help considering the moral attributes of God as claiming, in a more especial manner, our love and adoration, than either his wisdom or power.

With respect to that particular attribute of the Deity, to which the following reasonings more immediately relate, the general argument applies with singular force. The peculiar sentiment of approbation with which we regard the virtue of beneficence in others, and the peculiar satisfaction with which we reflect on such of our actions as have contributed to the happiness of mankind; to which we may add the exquisite pleasure accompanying the exercise of all the kind affections, naturally lead us to consider benevolence or goodness as the supreme attribute of God. It is difficult indeed to conceive what other motive could have induced a Being, completely and independently happy, to call his creatures into existence.

In this manner, then, without going further than our own moral perceptions, we have a strong argument for the moral attributes of God: and this argument will strike us with the greater force in proportion to the culture which our moral perceptions have received. The same observation may be applied to the moral argument for a future state. The effect of both these arguments on the mind may be in a great measure destroyed by dissipation and profligacy; or (on the other hand) by a sedulous and reverential attention to the moral suggestions of our own breasts, it may be identified with all our habits of thought and of action. It is owing to this that, while the truths of natural religion are regarded by some as the dreams of a warm imagination, they command the assent of others with the evidence of intuitive certainty. "Be persuaded," says Shaftesbury, "that wisdom is more from the *heart* than from the *head*. *Feel*

goodness, and you will see all things fair and good."—"Dwell with honesty, and beauty, and order; study and love what is of this kind, and in time you will know and love the Author." *

Impressed with a conviction of the justness and importance of this remark, I have always been of opinion that those who have written in defence of natural religion have insisted too much on the cold metaphysical argument which can only prove the power and wisdom of the Deity, and have addressed themselves too little to our moral constitution. It must be owing to this that some sceptical writers, who have admitted the evidence for the *physical* attributes of God, have denied or doubted of the evidence for his *moral* attributes. This in particular was the case with Lord Bolingbroke.† The arguments for the physical attributes are addressed to the understanding alone; those for the moral attributes to the heart. If you wish to convince a person who affects to be sceptical on *this* subject, you must begin with attempting to rouse his moral feelings. Convince him of the dignity of his nature, and inspire him with the love of virtue and of mankind, and you have gone far towards accomplishing your object. Just and comfortable views of Providence and of man's future destination will follow of course. And here, by the way, we may remark the additional reason which these considerations suggest, why the study of natural religion should not be considered as the foundation of moral philosophy, inasmuch as they show that just views of religion *presuppose* an examination of the moral constitution of man.

The foregoing reasonings rest entirely on our own moral perceptions, without any reference to facts collected from without: and I apprehend that it is only after establishing *a priori* this presumption for the divine goodness that we can proceed to examine the fact with safety. It is true, indeed, that, independently of this presumption, the disorders we see would not demonstrate ill intention in the Author of the Universe, as it

* Letter Sixth to a Student at the University.
† Philosophical Works, Vol. IV. Sections 40, 41.

would be still possible that the apparent disorders in that small part of it which falls under our observation might contribute to the happiness and perfection of the whole system. But the contrary supposition would be equally possible, that there is nothing absolutely good in the universe, and that the communication of suffering is the ultimate end of the laws by which it is governed.

The argument for the goodness of God, derived from our own moral constitution, and strengthened by the consideration of our ignorance of the plans of Providence, affords an answer to all the objections which have been urged against this attribute of the Deity. And the answer is conclusive, whatever the state of the fact may be with respect to the magnitude of the evils of which we complain.

"Imagine only," says Shaftesbury, "some person entirely a stranger to navigation and ignorant of the nature of sea or waters: How great his astonishment, when, finding himself on board some vessel anchored at sea remote from all land prospect, whilst it was yet a calm, he viewed the ponderous machine firm and motionless in the midst of the smooth ocean, and considered its foundation beneath, together with its cordage, masts and sails above—how easily would he see the *whole* one regular structure, all things depending on another; the uses of the rooms below, the lodgments and the conveniences of men and stores. But, being ignorant of the intent or design of all above, would he pronounce the masts and cordage to be useless and cumbersome, and for this reason condemn the frame and despise the Architect? O! my friend, let us not thus betray our ignorance, but consider where we are, and in what an universe. Think of the many parts of the vast machine in which we have so little insight, and of which it is impossible we should know the ends and uses: when, instead of seeing to the highest pendants, we see only some lower deck, and are in this dark case of flesh confined even to the hold and meanest station of the vessel."

But although this answer might silence our objections,

something more is requisite on a subject so momentous, to support our confidence, and to animate our hopes. If no account could be given of the evils of life, but that they *may possibly* be good relatively to the whole universe;—still more, if it should appear that the sufferings of life overbalance its enjoyments, it could hardly be expected that any speculative reasoning would have much effect in banishing the melancholy suggestions of scepticism. We are therefore naturally led, in the *first* place, to inquire whether some explanation may not be given *of the origin of evil*, from a consideration of the facts which fall under our notice; and *secondly*, to compare together the happiness and the misery which the world exhibits.

The question concerning *the origin of evil* has, from the earliest times, employed the ingenuity of speculative men; and various theories have been proposed to solve the difficulty. The most celebrated of these are the following:—

(1.) The Doctrine of Preexistence.
(2.) The Doctrine of the Manichæans.
(3.) The Doctrine of Optimism.

1. According to the first hypothesis the evils we suffer at present are punishments and expiations of moral delinquencies committed in a former stage of our being.

This was a favorite opinion of the ancient philosophers, and is maintained by Socrates in the Phædon of Plato, where the first idea of the doctrine seems to be ascribed to Orpheus as its author.* "The disciples of Orpheus," says he, "called the body a prison, because the soul is here in a state of punishment till it has expiated the faults that it committed in Heaven. Souls that are too much given to bodily pleasures, and are in a manner besotted, wander upon the earth, and are put into new bodies; for all sensuality and passion cause the soul to have a stronger attachment to the body, make her fancy that she is of the same nature, and render her in a manner corporeal, so that she contracts an incapacity of flying away into another life. Oppressed with the

* See Ramsay's Discourse on the Mythology of the Pagans.

weight of her impurity and corruption, she sinks again into matter, and becomes thereby disabled to remount towards the regions of purity, and attain to a reunion with her principle."

In the dialogue entitled *Politicus*, Plato, mentioning this primitive state of man, calls it the reign of Saturn, and describes it thus :—" God was then the Prince and common Father of all ; he governed the world by himself, as he governs it now by inferior deities ; rage and cruelty did not then prevail upon earth ; war and sedition were not so much as known. God himself took care of the sustenance of mankind, and was their guardian and shepherd. There were no magistrates nor civil polity as there are now. In those happy days men sprung out of the bosom of the earth, which produced them of itself like flowers and trees. The fertile fields yielded fruits and corn without the labor of tillage. Mankind stood in no need of raiment to cover their bodies, being troubled with no inclemency of the seasons ; and they took their rest on turf of a perpetual verdure. Under the reign of Jupiter, Saturn, the master of the universe, having quitted the reins of his empire, hid himself in an inaccessible retreat. The inferior gods who governed under him retired likewise ; the very foundations of the world were shaken by motions contrary to its principle and its end, and it lost its beauty and its lustre. Then it was that good and evil were blended together. But in the end, lest the world should be plunged into an eternal abyss of confusion, God, the Author of the Primitive Order, will appear again and resume the reins of empire. Then he will change, amend, embellish, and restore the whole frame of nature, and put an end to decay, to age, to diseases, and to death."

In order to understand some expressions in the foregoing passage it is necessary to know that Plato gave the name of the *first earth* to the place where souls made their abode before their degradation. "The earth," he says, " is immense ; we know, and we inhabit only a small corner of it. The etherial earth, the ancient abode of souls, is placed in the pure regions of Heaven,

where the stars are seated. We that live in this low abyss are apt enough to fancy that we are in a high place, and we call the air the heavens; just like a man that from the bottom of the sea should view the sun and the stars through the water, and fancy the ocean to be the firmament itself. But if we had wings to mount on high we should see that THERE is the true Heaven, the true light, and the true earth. As in the sea every thing is altered and disfigured by the salts that abound in it, so in our present earth every thing is deformed, corrupted, and in a ruinous condition if compared with the primitive earth." Of this etherial earth, whereof ours is only a broken crust, Plato gives afterwards a magnificent description. "Every thing there," says he, "was beautiful, harmonious, and transparent; fruits of an excellent taste grew there naturally; and it was watered with rivers of nectar. They there breathed the light, as we here breathe the air, and they drank waters purer than air itself."

The sublimity of some of these ideas cannot be disputed; and it would lead into a wide field of interesting disquisition to trace their origin and their connexion with other systems which have been adopted in different countries. At present we are concerned with this doctrine only in so far as it is offered as an account of the origin of evil; and for this purpose it is sufficient to remark, 1. That it is merely an hypothesis unsupported by any evidence; and 2. That the hypothesis (even if we were to admit it) only removes the difficulty a little out of sight, without affording any explanation of it. If the permission of evil in any former stage of our being was consistent with the perfections of God, why not in that state which we occupy at present? I pass over various weighty objections which might be founded on the absurdity of supposing the soul to expiate by its present sufferings faults of which it does not now retain any remembrance, and for which, of consequence, it cannot feel any remorse; a supposition plainly inconsistent with itself, inasmuch as the only effect of *punishment*, as a remedy for our moral diseases, must arise from the experimental warning it affords to the delin-

quent of the inseparable connexion between vice and misery.

2. The second theory that was mentioned with respect to the origin of evil is that of the Manichæans, who endeavour to obviate the difficulty by the opposite agencies of two coëternal and independent principles, the one the author of all the good, the other of all the evil of the universe.

This theory derives its name from Manichæus or Manes, a Chaldean or Babylonian by birth, who was born about the year 240 of the Christian era. The theory, however, is of a much more early origin, having been taught by the Persian Magi, whose doctrines on the subject are fully explained by Plutarch in his Treatise of Isis and Osiris. "Zoroaster," he tells us, "taught that there are two gods, contrary to each other in their operations; a good and an evil principle. To the former he gave the name of *Oromazes*, and the latter that of *Arimanius*. The one, he says, resembles light and truth, the other darkness and ignorance. There is likewise a middle god between these two, named *Mythras*. The Magi add, that Oromazes is born of the purest light, and Arimanius of darkness; that they continually make war upon one another; and that Oromazes made six genii, goodness, truth, justice, wisdom, plenty, and joy; and Arimanius made six others to oppose them, malice, falsehoood, injustice, folly, want, and sadness." They hold further, that "a time will come, appointed by fate, when Arimanius will be entirely destroyed and extirpated; the earth will change its form, and become plain and even; and happy men will have only one and the same life, language, and government." *

Of the particular form in which this doctrine was afterwards proposed by Manes, a full account is given by Beausobre in his History of Manichæism, an abstract of which account may be found in Jortin's Remarks on Ecclesiastical History. It is not worth our while at present to enter into any details on the subject.

In modern times M. Bayle has employed all the pow-

* See Ramsay on the Mythology of the Pagans.

ers of his lively and acute genius in adorning the Manichæan system, and in representing it as the most plausible of all the solutions that have ever been proposed of the origin of evil. He grants, at the same time, that this system is indefensible; and hence takes occasion to insinuate the futility of human reason, and to recommend to his readers an unlimited scepticism as the most important lesson to be learned from the controversy.

The celebrity of M. Bayle's name has induced several writers of eminence to examine this part of his works with a greater degree of attention than so very absurd a speculation seems to have merited. Among others Le Clerc, first in his *Parrhasiana*, and afterwards in his *Bibliothèque Choisie*. I shall not enter at all into the discussion, nor even attempt a statement of the reasonings *a priori* which have been urged in opposition to Bayle. A sufficient refutation of his opinions on this point may I hope be derived from what has been already advanced in proof of the *unity of design* manifested in every part of nature; a proposition which I shall have occasion to illustrate still more fully in the further prosecution of this argument, and which appears to have struck Mr. Hume himself so forcibly, that he rejects the supposition of two opposite principles "*as altogether unsuitable to the phenomena of the universe.*"

Before leaving this head it may be worth while to remark, that what we know of the tenets of this sect is derived entirely from the writings of their adversaries, as none of their own have survived to modern times. The most authentic documents of them may unquestionably be collected from the works of St. Augustine, who was himself educated in the heretical opinions of the Manichæans, and did not abandon them till he was able to think and to judge for himself. It may be reasonably presumed, therefore, not only that he was thoroughly acquainted with the details of their history, but that he represents them without any undue prejudice against their spirit and tendency.

3. The fundamental principle of the *Optimists* is, that all events are ordered for the best; and that the evils

which we suffer are parts of a great system conducted by Almighty power under the direction of infinite wisdom and goodness.

Under this general title, however, are comprehended two very different descriptions of philosophers,—those who admit, and those who deny the freedom of human actions and the accountableness of man as a moral agent. The former only contend that every thing is right, so far as it is the work of God; and endeavour to show that the creation of beings endowed with free will, and consequently liable to moral delinquency; and the government of the world by general laws, from which occasional evils *must* result, furnish no solid objection to the perfection of the universe. But they hold at the same time, that, although the permission of moral evil does not detract from the goodness of God, it is nevertheless imputable to man as a fault, and renders him justly obnoxious to punishment. This system (under a variety of different forms) has been in all ages maintained by the best and wisest philosophers, who, while they were anxious to vindicate the perfections of the Deity, saw the importance of stating their doctrine in a manner consistent with man's free will and moral agency. I need scarcely add, that this is precisely the doctrine of Scripture. "The Judge of the whole earth, shall he not do right?"—"It is impossible but that offences will come; but woe unto him through whom they come." *

It is of great importance to attend to the distinction between these two systems, because it is customary among sceptical writers to confound them studiously together, in order to extend to both that ridicule to which

* "The result of what Locke advances on this subject," say Dr. Warton, "is, that we have a power of doing what we will. If it be the occasion of disorder, it is the cause of order, of all the moral order that appears in the world. Had liberty been excluded, virtue had been excluded with it. And if this had been the case, the world could have had no charms, no beauties sufficient to recommend it to him who made it. In short, all other powers and perfections would have been very defective without this, which is truly the life and spirit of the whole creation."—*Warton's Notes on Pope.*

In what part of Locke's works Warton found the above passage he has not mentioned; and I confess I have some suspicion that he has committed a mistake with respect to the author. The passage, however, does Locke no discredit, and, I have no doubt, expresses his real sentiments on the subject.

the latter is justly entitled. This in particular was the case with *Voltaire*, who in many parts of his works, and more especially in a small treatise entitled *Candide ou l'Optimisme*, has exerted all the powers of his wit and ingenuity on the subject, arriving at last at this general conclusion, that the only possible way of reconciling the origin of evil with the moral attributes of God is to deny his omnipotence.

The attempt which this very lively writer, as well as many other modern sceptics have made to ridicule the scheme of *optimism*, has been much facilitated by the confused and inaccurate manner in which it has been stated by some who have proposed and defended it with the best intentions. Among this number we must include Pope, who undoubtedly meant to inculcate this system in its most unexceptionable form, but who has fallen into various unguarded expressions that appear favorable to fatalism.

> "If plagues and earthquakes break not Heaven's design,
> Why then a Borgia or a Catiline?"
> &c. &c. &c.

With respect to these unguarded expressions, there is an anecdote mentioned by Dr. Warton in his Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope, that helps to account for their admission into this poem, without leading us to question the sincerity of Pope's zeal for the great principles of morality and religion. The late Lord Bathurst, we are told, had read the whole scheme of the Essay on Man in the handwriting of Bolingbroke, and drawn up in a series of propositions, which Pope was to versify and illustrate. The same author mentions, upon what he thinks good authority, that Bolingbroke was accustomed to ridicule Pope, as not understanding the drift of his own principles in their full extent; an anecdote which is by no means improbable, when we compare the passage already quoted, and some others to the same purpose, with the author's explicit declarations in favor of man's free agency.

> "What makes all physical and moral ill?—
> There deviates nature, and here wanders will."

And still more directly in his Universal Prayer.

> "Yet gav'st me in this dark estate,
> To know the good from ill;
> And binding Nature fast in fate,
> Left free the human will."

I have entered into these particulars with respect to the Essay on Man, partly with a view of illustrating the distinction already hinted at between the two different forms in which the system of optimism has been proposed, and partly to have an opportunity of directing the attention of my readers to the noblest specimen of philosophical poetry which our language affords; and which, with the exception of a very few passages, contains a valuable summary of all that human reason has been able hitherto to advance in justification of the moral government of God. I now proceed to state the principal heads of this argument in that form in which it appears most satisfactory to my own mind; premising only, that, after all that reason can allege on this subject, there still remain insuperable difficulties connected with it which nothing but revelation can explain.

All the different subjects of human complaint may be reduced to two classes, *moral* and *physical* evils: the former comprehending those which arise from the abuse of free will; the latter those which result from the established laws of nature, and which man cannot prevent by his own efforts. These two classes of our evils, although they are often blended together in fact, will require, in the prosecution of this argument, a separate consideration.

I. It is justly observed by Butler, "that all we enjoy, and a great part of what we suffer, is *put in our own power;* for pleasure and pain are the consequences of our actions; and we are endued by the Author of our Nature with capacities for *foreseeing* these consequences. We find by experience he does not so much as preserve our lives, exclusively of our own care and attention, to provide ourselves with, and to make sure of that sustenance by which he has appointed our lives shall be preserved, and without which he has appointed they shall

not be preserved at all. And in general we foresee, that the external things which are the objects of our various passions can neither be obtained nor enjoyed without exerting ourselves in such and such manners; but by thus exerting ourselves we obtain and enjoy those objects in which our natural good consists. I know not that we have any one kind or degree of enjoyment but by the means of our own actions. And by prudence and care we may for the most part pass our days in tolerable ease and quiet; or, on the contrary, we may, by rashness, ungoverned passion, wilfulness, or even by negligence, make ourselves as miserable as ever we please."

Now, in so far as happiness and misery depend on ourselves, the question with respect to the permission of evil is reduced to this, Why was man made a free agent? Or, in other words, Why does not the Author of Nature make his creatures happy without the instrumentality of their own actions, and put it out of their power to incur misery by vice and folly? A question to which (if it is not too presumptuous to subject it to our discussion) the two following considerations seem to afford a sufficient answer.

1. In the first place, we may observe that perhaps the object of the Deity in the government of the world is not merely to communicate happiness, but to form his creatures to moral excellence; a purpose for the accomplishment of which it was absolutely necessary to bestow on them a freedom of choice between good and evil. This observation is hinted at by Butler in the following passage:—"Perhaps the Divine goodness, with which, if I mistake not, we make very free in our speculations, may not be a bare single disposition to produce happiness; but a disposition to make the good, the faithful, the honest man happy. Perhaps an infinitely perfect mind may be pleased with seeing his creatures behave suitably to the nature which he has given them; to the relations in which he has placed them to each other; and to that which they stand in to himself, which during their existence is even necessary, and which is the most important one of all. Perhaps, I say, an infinitely perfect mind may be pleased with the moral piety of moral agents in

and for itself, as well as upon account of its being essentially conducive to the happiness of his creation."

2. A second supposition which may be suggested in answer to the foregoing question is, that perhaps the enjoyment of high degrees of happiness may necessarily require the previous acquisition of virtuous habits; in which case a greater sum of happiness is produced by the present order of things than could have been gained by any other. Nor is this merely a gratuitous supposition; for we know from the fact, that the highest enjoyments of which our nature is susceptible arise from a conscientious discharge of our duty, and from the possession of those qualities which virtuous habits have a tendency to form or to inspire.

The sufferings produced by vice are on this supposition instances of the goodness of God, no less than the happiness resulting from virtue. The final cause of both is the same,—to promote the improvement of our nature; as it is from the same motive of love that an affectionate parent rewards the obedience, and punishes the disobedience of his child. It is, I think, a very fine and profound observation of *Maupertuis*, "that the concern which arises from repentance and remorse is more allied to pleasure than to pain. It contains a cure for that distress which it brings along with it, and a preservative against future pains of the same kind. The more sensibly they are felt at any particular time we shall be in less danger of feeling them afterwards." * I would add, however, as a necessary limitation of this remark, that it applies only to those slighter deviations from duty which may occasionally occur in the conduct of men habitually virtuous; for in the case of crimes of a deeper dye, and which unfit a man to continue any longer a member of society, remorse produces the unmixed agonies of despair.

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* Essai de Philosophie Morale, Chap. iii.
An idea similar to this occurs in the following lines of *De Lille*:

"L'âme, quelquefois, par le remords s'épure;
Il fait servir au bien le vice qui n'est plus,
Et cet enfant du crime est garant des vertus.
L'Imagination, Chant. ii.

II. These observations justify Providence not only for the permission of moral evil, but for the permission of many things which are commonly complained of as physical evils. How great is the proportion of these which are the obvious consequences of our vices and prejudices; and which, so far from being a necessary part of the order of nature, seem intended, in the progress of human affairs, as a gradual remedy against the causes which produce them? Suppose, for a moment, vice and prejudice banished from the world, what a train of miseries would be banished along with them! The physical evils that would remain would in truth almost vanish into nothing, when compared with the magnitude of those under which the human race groans at present. Now, whatever evils are consequences of vice and prejudice are not a *necessary* part of the order of nature. On the contrary, they lead to a correction of the abuses from which they spring. They warn us that there is something amiss in our own conduct or in that of other men; and they stimulate our exertions in the search of a remedy, as those occasional pains to which the body is liable tend to the preservation of health and vigor by the intimation they give of our internal disorders.

Some of our other complaints with respect to the lot of humanity will be found, on examination, to arise from partial views of the constitution of man and from a want of attention to the circumstances which promote his improvement, or which constitute his happiness. Such are those which sceptics have so often founded on a consideration of that life of labor and exertion both of body and of mind to which we are doomed by the necessities of our nature;—doomed as we are to "eat our bread in the sweat of our brows."

When we compare the condition of man at the moment of his first appearance on this scene with that of some other animals, he appears to be in many respects their inferior. His infancy is more helpless and of much longer duration; and even after the care of the parent has reared him to maturity, he is destitute of the essen-

tial advantages they enjoy in consequence of the formation of their bodies, and of the variety of their instincts. One animal is armed with the horn, another with the tusk, a third with the paw; most of them are covered with furs, or with skins of a sufficient thickness to protect them from the inclemencies of the seasons; and all of them are directed by instinct in what manner they may choose or construct the most convenient habitation for securing themselves from danger, and for rearing their offspring. The human infant alone enters the world naked and unarmed; exposed without a covering to the fury of the element; surrounded with enemies which far surpass him in strength or agility; and totally ignorant in what way he is to procure the comforts or even the necessaries of life. Notwithstanding, however, the unpromising aspect of his original condition, *man* has no just cause to complain of the bounty of nature; for it is in the apparent disadvantages of his condition, in the multiplicity of his wants, and in the urgency of his necessities, that the foundation is laid of that superiority which he is destined to acquire over all the other inhabitants of the globe. "*Flens animal*," says Pliny, speaking of the human infant, "*Flens animal, cæteris imperaturum.*"

The necessity of certain inconveniences in our external circumstances to rouse the energies and to improve the capacities of the human mind, is strongly illustrated by the comparatively low state of the intellectual powers, in such tribes of our species as derive the necessaries and accommodations of life from the immediate bounty of nature. No other explanation can, I think, be given of those peculiarities in the genius of some of the South Sea islanders, which have been remarked by some of our late navigators, particularly by Dr. Forster in his Account of the Inhabitants of Otaheite. "The natives of Otaheite," he informs us, "and the adjacent Society Isles, are generally of a lively, brisk temper, great lovers of mirth and laughter, and of an open, easy, benevolent character. Their natural levity hinders them from paying a long attention to any one thing. You might as well undertake to fix

mercury as to keep their mind steady on the same subject."

Such indeed is the constitution of the human mind, that it may be safely affirmed that any individual might be fixed through life in a state of infantine imbecility, by withholding every stimulus to his active exertions, and by gratifying every want as fast as it arose. It is with much judgment, therefore, that Virgil mentions the origin of the arts as a necessary consequence of the changes in the natural world subsequent to the golden age.

> "Tum variæ venêre artes: labor omnia vicit
> Improbus, et duris urgens in rebus egestas."

And that he refers this introduction of indigence and labor to a benevolent intention in Providence.

> "Pater ipse colendi
> Haud facilem esse viam voluit, primusque per artem
> Movit agros, curis acuens mortalia corda,
> Nec torpere gravi passus sua regna veterno."

Nor is the activity of life merely the school of wisdom and of virtue to man; it is the great source of his present *enjoyment.*

"If we attempt," says Dr. Ferguson, "to conceive such a scene as some sceptics would require to evince the wisdom and goodness of God, a scene in which every desire were at once gratified without delay, difficulty, or trouble, it is evident that on such supposition the end of every active pursuit would be anticipated; exertion would be prevented, every faculty remain unemployed, and mind itself would be no more than a consciousness of languor under an oppression of weariness, such as satiety and continued inoccupation are known to produce.

"On this supposition all the active powers which distinguish human nature would be superfluous, and only serve to disturb his peace, or sour the taste of those inferior pleasures which appear to be consistent with indolence and sloth.*

* Principles of Moral and Political Science, Vol. I. p. 178.

"The happiness of man when most distinguished," continues the same author, "is not proportioned to his external possessions, but to the exertion and application of his faculties. It is not proportioned to his exemption from danger, but to the magnanimity, courage, and fortitude with which he acts. It is not proportioned to the benefits he receives, but to those he bestows: or rather to the candor and benevolence with which, as a person obliging and obliged, he is ready to embrace his fellow creatures, and to acknowledge or reward their merits. Even while he complains of his lot he is not unhappy. His complaints are no more than the symptoms of a mind that is engaged in some pursuit, by which his wishes are engrossed, but of which the end is still unobtained. In the absence of such occupations and troubles as are prescribed by necessity, he devises for the most part a similar course of occupations, trouble, difficulty, and danger for himself.

"The rich and powerful, (say the vulgar,) are happy, for they are exempted from labor and care. Their pleasures come unsought for, and without any alloy of pain. But what are the high objects of ambition to which the wealthy and the powerful aspire? Are they not often situations of great trouble and danger, in continual application to arduous affairs of state, or in frequent exposure to the dangers of war? What do the idle devise to fill up the blank of real affairs? Not a bed of repose, nor a succession of inert and slothful enjoyments; they devise sports that engage them in labor and toil not less severe than that of the indigent man who works for his bread; and expose themselves to dangers not less real than those which occur in what are thought the most hazardous pursuits of human life.

"In the intermission of business, and in the absence of danger, what has the secure and the idle, under the denomination of play, devised for his own recreation? A course of serious and intense application, a state of suspense between good and ill fortune, between profit and loss. While he strenuously labors to obtain the one and to avoid the other, he calls the one a *good* and the

other an *evil;* but he has himself voluntarily incurred the chance of good and evil. He exults in gain, and he laments his loss; but he still freely embraces the chance by which he is exposed to one or the other. The game, such as it is, he considers as a fit pastime for himself; and though he complains of his fortune when unsuccessful, he is never so unreasonable as to arraign the Inventor of the game for having admitted the possibility of ill as well as good fortune.

"The passion for play is comparatively mean and unworthy; but the illustration it brings to the condition of man is apposite, and will justify the terms in which we conclude, that in the game of human life the Inventor knew well how to accommodate the players." *

For the subjects of those complaints which have been now under our consideration, a foundation is laid in the general laws of nature, and in the constitution of the human mind. The one is adapted to the other, as the fin of the fish is adapted to the water, or the wing of the bird to the air; and if the order of things was changed in conformity to our wishes, the world would be no longer a scene fitted for such beings as inhabit it at present. Our complaints are founded in our ignorant conceptions of our real good, which lead us to mistake what are in truth excellencies and beauties in the scheme of Providence for imperfections and deformities.

The circumstances on which these complaints are founded are in some degree common to the whole race; and wherever this is the case, I believe it will not be difficult to trace the beneficent purposes of Providence. But what account shall we give of the evils produced by what are commonly called the *accidents* of life: accidents from which no state of society, how perfect soever, can possibly be exempted; and which, if they be subservient to any benevolent purposes, contribute to none within the sphere of our knowledge? What account shall we give of those cruel calamities which so often overwhelm individuals, and aggravate the mise-

* Principles of Moral and Political Science, Vol. I. pp. 185, 186, 187.

ries of their condition so far beyond the common lot of humanity? That troubles should occur in the life of man we can see obvious reasons; and in fact they do occur in a sufficient degree in the life of the most fortunate. But why those awful strokes that so often fall on men of inoffensive or virtuous habits, and who do not seem to stand more in need of the school of adversity than many around them who enjoy in security all the goods of fortune?

On such occasions we must no doubt be frequently forced to acknowledge that the ways of Providence are unsearchable, and we must strive to fortify our minds by the pious hope, that the sufferings we endure at present are subservient to some beneficial plan which we are unable to comprehend. In the mean time, it is of the utmost consequence for us always to recollect, that accidents of this sort are inseparable from a state of things where the inhabitants are free agents, and where the Deity governs by general laws. They could not be prevented but by particular interpositions, or in other words, by suspending occasionally the general laws by which his administration is conducted. That the evils resulting from such suspensions would far outweigh the partial good to be gained from them is obvious even to our limited faculties.

With respect to these *general laws*, their tendency will be found in every instance favorable to order and to happiness. This observation, I am persuaded, will appear, upon an accurate examination, to hold without any exception whatever; and it is one of the noblest employments of philosophy to verify and illustrate its universality, by investigating the beneficent purposes to which the laws of nature are subservient. Now it is evidently from these general laws alone that the ultimate ends of Providence can be judged of, and not from their accidental collisions with the partial interests of individuals; collisions, too, which so often arise from an abuse of their moral liberty. It is the great error of the vulgar (who are incapable of comprehensive views) to attempt to read the ways of Providence in particular events, and to judge favorably or unfavorably of the

order of the universe from its accidental effects with respect to themselves or their friends. Perhaps indeed this disposition is inseparable in some degree from the weakness of humanity. But surely *it is* a weakness that we ought to strive to correct; and the more we *do* correct it, the more pleasing our conceptions of the universe become. Accidental inconveniences disappear when compared with the magnitude of the advantages which it is the object of the general laws to secure: "Or," as one author has expressed it, "scattered evils are lost in the blaze of superabundant goodness, as the spots on the disk of the sun are lost in the splendor of his rays."

While the laws of nature thus appear to be favorable to order and to happiness in their general tendency, salutary effects arise from the influence of "time and chance" on human affairs. If the goods of fortune were distributed with an exact regard to the merits of individuals, the selfish passions of men would coincide in every instance with the sense of duty; and no occasion would be furnished for those efforts of self-denial by which our characters are displayed, and our moral habits confirmed.

Many of our moral qualities, too, are the result of habits which imply the existence of physical evil. Patience, fortitude, humanity, all suppose a scene in which sufferings are to be endured in our own case, or relieved in the case of others.

Thus it appears not only that partial evils *may* be good with respect to the whole system, but that their tendency *is* beneficial, on the whole, even to that small part of it which we see.

The argument for the goodness of God, which arises from the foregoing considerations, will be much strengthened if it shall appear further, that the sum of happiness in human life far exceeds the sum of misery.* For

* An essay on this subject by Maupertuis, published about the middle of the last century, maintaining the preponderance of misery over happiness in human life, drew a good deal of attention, both in France and England, from the high mathematical reputation of the author. His reasonings are not of sufficient consequence to induce me to interrupt the train of these observations by a formal refutation, but I shall touch in this note on the principal heads of his argument.

1. He lays great stress on the love of variety, or the perpetual desire of changing

our satisfaction on this point, it will be necessary for us to recur again to the distinction formerly made between *moral* and *physical evils*, and to consider how the balance appears to stand between *them* and the two corresponding sources of happiness or good, upon a general survey of what passes in the world.

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our situation. "La vie est-elle autre chose qu'un souhait continuel de changer de perception? elle se passe dans les désirs; et tout l'intervalle qui en sépare l'accomplissement nous le voudrions anéanti."

In answer to this it may be remarked, that our perpetual desire of change is not always a proof of a sense of misery. It often arises from a desire of some *addition to our happiness*, which we imagine to be placed within our reach. Maupertuis thinks that the interval between the commencement of desire and the enjoyment is painful. The contrary has been the common opinion, and is the just one.

"'Tis the pursuit rewards the active mind,
And what in rest we seek in toil we find."

2. Maupertuis considers our love of amusement as a proof of our misery. "Tous les divertissemens des hommes prouvent le malheur de leur condition. Ce n'est que pour éviter des perceptions fâcheuses que celui-ci joue aux échecs, que cet autre court à la chasse: Tous cherchent dans des occupations sérieuses ou frivoles l'oubli d'eux-mêmes."

On the contrary, we never desire amusement but when our situation is comparatively easy and comfortable.

3. Maupertuis asserts that few would choose to live over their lives a second time. "On en trouvera bien peu qui voulussent recommencer leur vie telle qu'elle a été, qui voulussent repasser par tous les mêmes états dans lesquels ils se sont trouvés."

Our sentiments on this subject are warped by our opinions, our hopes, and our fears, concerning futurity. The fact may be doubted in all its extent. *Admitting* the fact, it would only prove, that, with the feelings we have at the close of life, we could not relish those pleasures we formerly enjoyed. A man after the pleasures of the day may enjoy the repose of night, without giving any ground to conclude that the day was unhappy. Even supposing the mind to retain its vigor and its sensibility, the repetition of the same pleasures would produce satiety; but our pleasures are not the less real while we continue to enjoy them, that they cease to please by long repetition.

At an earlier period than Maupertuis, Wollaston indulged views of human life tinctured in some degree with the same gloom, and is represented by Bolingbroke, who calls him "a whining philosopher," as maintaining the same paradox with regard to the preponderance of misery. In this instance Bolingbroke appears to me to have done him considerable injustice; but supposing the charge to be well grounded, (a question which we have not time to settle at present) the following remarks of the noble author may be safely subscribed to.

"Let us be convinced, however, in opposition to atheists and divines, that the general state of mankind, in the present scheme of Providence, is a state not only tolerable but happy. Without having Wollaston's balance, wherein he weighs happiness and misery even to grains and scruples, we may pronounce that there is much more good than evil in it; and prove what we pronounce even by his authority, and that of those who deny it like him, if any such authority can be wanting. It is plain that every man has more good than evil in actual enjoyment, or in prospect, since every man prefers existing as he is to non-existence, and since none of them, not those who suffer the worst accidents in life, are willing to abandon it, and to go out of the state these declaimers represent to be so miserable. The proposition may be advanced thus generally, because there are very few examples to the contrary, and those are of men run mad by distemper, or made so by some prevailing enthusiasm. * * * What our author's circumstances were of any kind I am ignorant. But whatever they were I am persuaded you will be of my opinion, that any charitable person who had offered to cut his throat, in order only to deliver him from the miseries he complained of in such lamentable terms, would have been very ill received."—*Bolingbroke's Philosophical Works*, Vol. IV. pp. 386, 387.

Before entering on the first of these heads, I think it necessary to observe, that when I speak of the preponderancy of *moral good* in the world, I do not mean to draw any inference in favor of the secret springs of human conduct, as they appear in the sight of that Being who alone is acquainted with every thought of the heart; but only to illustrate the kind provision which is made in the constitution of man, and in the circumstances of his condition, for the growth and culture of those dispositions which are favorable to the happiness of individuals, and to the good order of society;—of those dispositions, in short, which it is the object of wise laws to secure, and of wise systems of education to encourage and to cherish. Nor does the scope of my argument lead to any conclusion concerning the comparative numbers of good and bad men.* The lives of the best will not bear a moment's comparison with the moral law engraven on our hearts; but still it may be true, that (corrupted as mankind are) the proportion of human life which is spent in vice is inconsiderable when compared with the whole of its extent. The fact undoubtedly, if on examination it should appear at all probable, would afford an additional illustration of the beneficent arrangements made by our Creator for the good order and for the happiness of this world; and might suggest a salutary lesson to legislators to study *the intentions of nature* as the best guides in the science of jurisprudence; or (to express myself in less equivocal language) to trust, in the administration of human affairs, *more* than they have been commonly disposed to do, to those provisions which have been made for the comfort and for the improvement of the species by the beneficent wisdom of God.

1. And here, in the first place, I would observe, with respect to the balance of *moral* good and evil, that a fact already taken notice of in treating of the *desire of power* affords of itself a complete decision of the question. How few are the opportunities which most individuals enjoy of rendering any extensive service to their fellow

* See Dr. Law's Translation of Archbishop King's Essay on the Origin of Evil, p. 420, Note (AA.) Fourth Edition.

creatures! And how completely is it in the power of the most insignificant person to disturb the happiness of thousands! If the benevolent dispositions of mankind, therefore, had not a very decided predominance over the principles which give rise to competition and enmity, what a different aspect would society have from what it actually presents to us; or rather, how would it be possible for the existence of society to be continued?

2. There is another fact which strongly confirms the same conclusion,—the constant exertion and circumspection necessary to acquire and maintain a good name in the world; a circumspection not only in avoiding any gross violation of duty, but in avoiding even the appearance of evil. For how often does it happen that a well earned reputation, the fruit of a long and virtuous life, is blasted at once by a single inconsiderate action,—not perhaps proceeding from any very criminal motive, but from a momentary forgetfulness of what is due to public opinion! The common complaint, therefore, we hear of the prevalence of vice in the world, (I mean the opinion of good and candid men on the subject, for I speak not at present of the follies of the splenetic and censorious) ought rather to be considered as proofs of the high standard of excellence presented to our view by the Author of our moral constitution, than as proofs of any peculiar degeneracy in the manners of our contemporaries.

3. It is of importance to remark how small is the number of individuals who draw the attention of the world by their crimes, when compared with the millions who pass their days in inoffensive obscurity. Of this it is scarcely necessary to produce any other proof than the fact which is commonly urged on the opposite side of the argument, the catalogue of crimes and of calamities which sully the history of past ages. For whence is the interest we take in historical reading, but from the singularity of the events it records, and from the contrast which its glaring colors present to the uniformity and repose of private life?

We may add to this observation, that even in those

unhappy periods which have furnished the most ample materials to the historian, the storm has spent its rage in general on a comparatively small number of men placed in the more conspicuous stations of society by their birth, by their talents, by their ambition, or by an heroical sense of duty, while the unobserved multitude saw it pass over their head, or only heard its noise at a distance. Nor must we pronounce (among men called upon to the discharge of arduous trusts) all those to have been unhappy who are commonly styled the unfortunate. The mind suits itself to the part it is destined to act; and, when great and worthy objects are before it, exults in those moments of hazard and alarm, which, even while they threaten life and freedom, leave us in possession of every thing that constitutes the glory and the perfection of our nature.

> "In secret streams which no loud storms annoy,
> Glides the smooth current of domestic joy:—
> The lifted axe, the agonizing wheel,
> Luke's iron crown, and Damiens' bed of steel,
> To men remote from power but rarely known,
> Leave reason, faith, and conscience all our own."

The observations already made are I hope sufficient to obviate some of the strongest prejudices which are commonly entertained on this subject; but the argument may be pushed much further than I have yet done. I have spoken of the multitudes who pass through life in obscurity as if their characters were merely inoffensive, and entitled them only to a negative praise; whereas it may be reasonably doubted if it is not among them that the highest attainments of humanity have been made. In one half of our species, not destined by nature to come forward like our sex on the great theatre of human affairs, how meritorious in most instances, how exalted in many instances, is the general tenor of their conduct! And when unusual combinations of circumstances have forced them into situations of difficulty and danger, what splendid examples of constancy and magnanimity have they left behind them! Every person too who has turned his attention at all to the manners of the lower orders, and who has studied with candor what Gray finely calls "*The short and simple annals of*

the poor," must have met, among the many faults that may be fairly charged on their education and their circumstances, with numberless instances of integrity and of humanity which would have added lustre to the highest stations. There is not a more interesting circumstance mentioned in any biographical detail than the emotion which *Molière* is said to have discovered when a common beggar, to whom he had hastily given a piece of gold instead of a small copper coin, returned and informed him of his mistake. "Où la vertu va-t-elle se nicher!" An exclamation which, as *Bailly* observes, "throws a stronger light on the character of the man who uttered it than all the anecdotes which have been collected of his wit and pleasantry."

It is not, however, by *facts* alone that our conclusions on this subject ought to be limited; for it is one of the amiable weaknesses often attendant upon worth (if it is indeed a weakness) to shun the observation of the world, and (as Pope alleges of his friend Mr. Allen) to feel "*an awkward shame*" when detected in acts of beneficence:

—"*Do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame.*"

It is even proper and prudent in many instances to draw a veil over our *moral sensibilities*, were it for no other reason than this, that an assumed expression of them has been so often made subservient to the purposes of hypocrisy and affectation.

These imperfect hints, if they are allowed to be well founded, go far to justify a very pleasing idea of Mr. Addison's, that "there are probably greater men who lie concealed among the species than those who come out and draw on themselves the eyes and admiration of mankind."—"If we suppose," says he, "there are spirits or angels who look into the ways of men, how different are the notions which they entertain of us from those which we are apt to form of one another! We are dazzled with the splendor of titles; the ostentation of learning; the noise of victories. They, on the contrary, see the philosopher in the cottage, who possesses his soul in patience and thankfulness, under the pressure of

what little souls call poverty and distress. They do not look for great men at the head of armies, or among the pomp of a court; but often find them out in shades and solitudes, in the private walks and bye-paths of life. The evening walk of a wise man is more illustrious in their sight than the march of a general at the head of a victorious army. A contemplation of God's works; a voluntary act of justice to our own detriment; tears that are shed in silence for the miseries of others; a private desire or resentment broken or subdued: In short, an unfeigned exercise of humility or any other virtue are such actions as are glorious in their sight, and denominate men great and respectable. The most famous among us are often looked upon with pity, with contempt, or with indignation, while those who are most obscure among their own species are regarded with love, with approbation and esteem." *

In the foregoing reasonings I have not thought it necessary to enter into any nice metaphysical disquisitions with respect to the circumstances on which the moral merit and demerit of actions depend, but have expressed myself agreeably to the common language on the subject, though far from being strictly accurate. A distinction which I shall afterwards have occasion to illustrate between *absolute* and *relative* rectitude would enable me to *explain away* a much greater proportion of the apparent wickedness of our species. As I am unwilling, however, to anticipate at present that very important speculation, I shall confine myself to a simple statement of the distinction, and to a few very slight hints with respect to its application to the question before us.

An action is said to be absolutely right when it is in every respect suitable to the circumstances in which the agent is placed; or, in other words, when it is such as, with perfectly good intentions, under the guidance of an

* Descartes seems to have been strongly impressed with these sentiments when he chose for his motto:—"*Qui bene latuit, bene vixit.*" Such also is the evident import of the line in Horace:

"Nec vixit male qui natus moriensque fefellit."

Horace, Epist. 1.

enlightened and well informed understanding, he would have performed.

An action is said to be relatively right when the intentions of the agent are sincerely good, whether his conduct be suitable to his circumstances or not.

According to these definitions it is evident that an action may be *right* in one sense and *wrong* in another; and it is no less evident that it is the *relative* rectitude alone of an action which determines the moral desert of the agent in the sight of God and of his own conscience.

In computing, therefore, the moral demerit of mankind from their external actions, a large allowance ought to be made for those circumstances which may occasion deviations in their conduct from absolute rectitude, without affecting the sincerity of their good intentions. In particular, a large allowance ought to be made for erroneous speculative opinions;—for false conceptions of facts;—for prejudices inspired by the influence of prevailing manners;—and for habits contracted insensibly in early infancy.

On each of these heads much might be offered; but the variety of matter which crowds upon me renders it necessary to make a selection of such articles as are connected with the general argument. *One* circumstance alone now mentioned, *false conceptions of facts*, is sufficient to account for most of the cruel enmities in the world, both between nations and individuals. How often do we see this hostile disposition existing between two men, both of whom every impartial judge knows to be actuated by the worthiest motives, and of whom, perhaps, neither would be much to blame for his conduct, if his adversary were such a man as he takes him to be! In such instances we may have just cause to regret too great an irritability of temper, too suspicious and jealous a disposition; or perhaps to wish that the parties possessed more good sense, and less narrow and prejudiced minds. But the more closely we study the circumstances of the case we shall be the more disposed to acquit them of that intentional injustice, and of that pure vindictive malice which they impute to each other,

and which the world is likely, on a superficial view of the subject, to impute to both. If mankind were universally possessed of more enlarged and just understandings, every thing else in their characters remaining as at present, little would be wanting to complete the order and harmony of society. And hence some have been led to imagine that vice and folly are only different names for the same thing. This seems to have been the opinion of Plato, according to whom "virtue may be considered as a sort of science, and no man can see clearly and demonstratively what is right and what is wrong, and not act accordingly." But this, as will afterwards appear, was an excess of refinement; and it was with good reason Aristotle taught in opposition to it, "That no conviction of the understanding is capable of getting the better of inveterate habits, and that good morals arise not from knowledge but from action."

I cannot leave this head without again remarking the great importance, in forming our estimates of human character, of making suitable allowances for prejudices inspired by the influence of prevailing manners, and for habits contracted in early infancy. It was justly remarked by Turgot, that bad laws are the great source of bad morals: And "hence it was," says one of his biographers, "that, with an exemplary purity, and even severity in his own manners, he was so candid and indulgent in his opinions of others. Whatever their conduct might be, if it indicated no meanness, no falseness, no insensibility, no contempt for the rights of mankind, no tyranny, he was ever ready to pardon it; for he saw in it the imperfections of social institutions, not the faults of the individual; and when these weaknesses or vices were joined with estimable qualities, or with real virtues, he respected the virtues as the work of the man himself, and regarded his failings with the pity due to misfortunes."

So much with respect to the balance of *moral* evil and *moral* good in human life.

2. With respect to the balance of *physical* evil and *physical* good the argument is still clearer, or rather it is so clear as to preclude the possibility of any discussion,

provided only it be acknowledged that the general laws of nature are beneficent in their tendency, and that the inconveniences arising from them are only occasional. And surely upon this point there can be no hesitation. Indeed the *fact* is so indisputable and so obvious, that we may venture to rest the whole question at issue upon the impossibility of pointing out any one general physical law that could have been more wisely or beneficently ordered.

Among the occasional evils, too, that result from the physical laws by which this world is governed, no inconsiderable part may be traced to the obstacles which human institutions oppose to the order of things recommended by nature. How chimerical soever the speculations of philosophers concerning the perfection of legislation may be, they are useful at least in illustrating the wisdom and goodness of the Divine government. For this purpose I have often thought that it might form both an agreeable and instructive employment to follow out the supposition to its remote consequences, by considering the changes that in process of time would take place in the physical and in the moral condition of mankind, in consequence of the gradual influence of such institutions, as it is easy for a philosopher to conceive in theory. But in these disquisitions I cannot indulge myself at present.

It is of more consequence for us to remark a most beautiful and merciful remedy, (at least in part) which is provided for the occasional evils that in every state of society must be inseparable in a greater or less degree, from a world like ours, governed by general laws, and inhabited by free agents. The remedy I allude to is the constitution of the human mind with respect to *habits*. So great is their influence, that there is hardly any situation to which the wishes of an individual may not be reconciled; nay, where he will not find himself in time more comfortable than in those which are looked up to with envy by the bulk of mankind.

In judging of the fortunes of those who are placed in situations very different from our own, due allowances are seldom made for the effects of this principle. We

conceive ourselves to be placed in the circumstances they occupy, and judge of their happiness or misery by what we should experience if we were to change our condition without any change in our habits. How dreadful, for example, in our apprehension, the lot of those who, to gratify the luxurious wants of their superiors, drag out a miserable existence (and for a scanty recompense) in the bowels of the earth! And accordingly, there is none of the evils connected with polished life which Mr. Burke has painted with greater force of eloquence in his ironical *Vindication of Natural Society.* Even here, however, the evil (which is unquestionably a real one, for it implies a vitiated taste with respect to our purest and most genuine pleasures) is probably not a little magnified by our disposition to measure it by our own feelings. "I have been assured," says Dr. Beattie, "by a man of humanity and observation, the superintendent of an English colliery, that his people would rather work in their pits, three hundred feet under ground, than labor in a field of hay in the finest sunshine." The same fact, or at least facts perfectly analogous, have been often stated to myself by persons who were able to speak on the subject, from instances which fell under their own daily notice.

It is still more pleasing to remark the versatility of human nature, as it is exemplified among the inhabitants of the different regions of the globe; accommodating itself every where (and apparently with the same facility) to the physical circumstances of the climate where the lot of the individual has been cast.

"Consider," says Seneca, "all those nations with whom the tranquillity of our empire terminates; I speak of the *Germans* and of the other wandering hordes in the neighbourhood of the Danube, oppressed with a perpetual winter, and with a lowering sky; their scanty subsistence depends on a barren soil; their shelter from rain is furnished by thatch and leaves; they pass over their fens on the ice which gives them solidity; they employ as articles of food the wild beasts which they have seized in the chase. Do these men appear to you to be unhappy? No. *Habit* becomes to them a second

nature, and what was at first imposed by necessity is now converted into a source of pleasure. The truth is, that the same external circumstances which you picture to yourself as the extreme of wretchedness, constitutes to numerous tribes of your fellow creatures the whole circle of enjoyment which human life affords them. 'Hoc tibi calamitas videtur? Tot gentium vita est.'" *

"The Laplander," says a writer in the Amœnitates Academicæ, "is continually occupied with the care of his flock by night and day, not only in the summer, but also in every season of the year, and is obliged to wander up and down in his immense woods during all the extremities of a polar winter. The miserable herdsman must sink under such revolutions of distress, did not nature balance them with comforts able to support him under them. During his long night, the frosty brilliancy of the stars, the reflection of the snow, and the aurora borealis, with a thousand diversities of figure and radiation, supply the absence of the sun; his clothes, gloves, and shoes are furnished him by the hide of the reindeer; and the two latter being stuffed with the *Carex vesicaria* are a sufficient protection against the utmost extremity of the cold. With his dog and pipe of tobacco, his only luxury, he lives as contented and happy as the Tityrus of Virgil in the fine climate and voluptuous shades of Naples. With such ductility does nature yield to early habits."

I have quoted this passage, not only on account of the example it furnishes of the accommodating powers of the human frame, but as an illustration of the provision which nature often makes, in collateral physical circumstances, against the partial inconveniences resulting from her own general arrangements.

Nor is it only in infancy that the mind is susceptible of these habits. Numberless instances might be quoted from the history of our species to show with what facility individuals, who had been accustomed to all the luxuries of life, have reconciled themselves to labor, hardship, and poverty, and even in some cases to a

* De Provid.

complete privation of all the comforts connected with civilized society.

Illustrations of these remarks may be collected by every one within the circle of his own experience; and whoever takes the trouble to verify them in particular instances will find ample ground to admire the kind palliative which is thus provided against the evils of our present uncertain state, as well as the most satisfactory evidence that our common estimates of the happiness of life fall short greatly of the truth.

Having dwelt so long on the beneficent tendency of those laws which regulate the more essential interests of mankind, I must content myself with barely mentioning, before leaving this subject, the rich provision made for our enjoyment in the pleasures of the understanding, of the imagination, and of the heart. How delightful are the pursuits of science, how various, how inexhaustible! How pure, how tranquil are the pleasures afforded by the fine arts! How enlivening the charms of social intercourse! How exquisite the endearments of affection! How sublime the raptures of devotion! The accommodation of our *sensitive* powers to the scene we occupy is still more wonderful: inasmuch as over and above the care which is taken for the preservation of our animal being, and the means provided for our intellectual and moral improvement, there appears to be a positive adaptation of our frame to the earth we inhabit; an adaptation our Maker could destine for no other end but to multiply the sources of our enjoyment. Surely he might have contrived to enlighten the earth without displaying to our view the glories of the firmament. The day and the night might have regularly succeeded each other without our once having beheld the splendor of a morning sun, or the glow of an evening sky. The spring might have ministered to the fertility of summer and of autumn without scattering over the earth a profusion of flowers and blossoms, without refreshing the eye with the soft verdure of the fields, or filling the woods with joy and melody.

"Nor content
With every food of life to nourish man,

Thou mad'st all nature beauty to his eye
And music to his ear!"

"The whole frame of the universe," says Epictetus, "is full of the goodness of God; and to be convinced of this important truth nothing more is necessary than an attentive mind and a grateful heart."

It is however true, as Dr. Paley has remarked in by far the finest passage of his work on Moral Philosophy, "That the contemplation of *universal* nature rather *bewilders* the mind than *affects* it. There is always a *bright spot* in the prospect upon which the eye rests; a single example, perhaps, by which each man finds himself more *convinced* than by all others put together. *I* seem for my own part to see the benevolence of the Deity more clearly in the pleasures of very young children than in any thing in the world. The pleasures of grown persons may be reckoned partly of their own procuring, especially if there has been any industry, or contrivance, or pursuit to come at them, or if they are founded, like music and painting, upon any qualification of their own acquiring. But the pleasures of a healthy infant are so manifestly provided for by *another*, and the benevolence of the provision is so unquestionable, that every child I see at its sport affords to my mind a kind of sensible evidence of the finger of God, and of the disposition which directs it.

"But the example which strikes each man most strongly is the true example for him, and hardly two minds hit upon the same;—which shows the abundance of such examples about us."

Of the Evidences of the Moral Government of the Deity.

From the observations made on the foregoing subject it sufficiently appears that the constitution of the universe, and the general laws which regulate the course of human affairs, are wisely and beneficently contrived for the happiness of man; that the sufferings which occur in human life furnish no direct evidence of ill inten-

tion in the Author and Governor of the world; and that our own moral constitution (which we cannot help conceiving to have some conformity to the moral attributes of God) affords the strongest presumption that these sufferings are all subservient to beneficial purposes. But although *benevolence* and *goodness* be plainly an attribute of the Deity, it is not the *only* character in which he manifests himself to us in the course of his providence. There is another character perfectly consistent with this, and perhaps in fact a consequence of it, but which involves a different and very important consideration;—that of the *righteous* Governor of the universe, whose object is not merely to communicate happiness, but to reward virtue and to punish vice.

From the order of the universe, and the combination of means we every where see employed to accomplish particular ends, we formerly concluded that it is the work of an intelligent mind. Now the same mode of reasoning leads us with equal certainty to draw other inferences concerning the Divine Nature and attributes. It was observed in the course of our argument with respect to the goodness of God, "that all which we enjoy, and a great part of what we suffer, is put in our own power."—"That pleasures and pains are the consequences of our actions; and that we are endued with capacities for foreseeing these consequences." That one course of conduct leads to happiness and another to misery is a *fact* confirmed by the general course of events; and as the general course of events means to those who acknowledge the existence of God the same thing with the general plan of Divine Providence, this fact proves that God exercises a *government* over the world by means of rewards and punishments; a government analogous to that which a master exercises over his servants, or a civil magistrate over his subjects. Nor is this all. From an examination of the course of human affairs it appears clearly, that, although happiness and misery are by no means distributed with an exact regard to the merits of individuals, yet they are so to so great a degree as may convince us that the *leading* object of Providence is to reward the good and

to punish the evil. In other words, it appears that God exercises over the world not merely a government but a *moral* government; not so perfect indeed as our moral constitution would lead us to desire, but sufficiently discernible in its *general tendency* to every attentive and well disposed mind.

According to some philosophers and divines the sole ultimate end of the creation was the communication of happiness, and the sole moral attribute of the Deity is *pure benevolence.* It is not impossible that this may be the case; nay, there are various considerations which make this not an improbable opinion. On this supposition we must conclude that the Deity bestowed on us our moral constitution as a *mean* towards a further *end,*—the happiness of our own nature;—and distributed rewards and punishments only to secure this end more effectually. It is not impossible there may be beings in the creation to whom he manifests himself alone under the character of benevolence. But all this is mere speculative supposition. The rules of our conduct are not to be derived from *possibilities* but from *facts;* and all that the fact authorizes us in this instance to conclude is, that God exercises over us a moral government by rewards and punishments, analogous to that which the civil magistrate establishes for preserving the order of society.*

Upon this subject two methods of arguing have been employed, which tend wonderfully to illustrate and confirm each other: the one founded on an examination of our own moral constitution; and the other on an examination of the ordinary course of Providence in the administration of human affairs. The former should, I

* "The annexing pleasure to some actions, and pain to others, in our power to do or to forbear, and giving notice of this appointment beforehand to those whom it concerns, is the proper formal notion of government. Whether the pleasure or pain which thus follows upon our behaviour be owing to the Author of Nature acting upon us every moment which we feel it, or to his having at once contrived and executed his own part in the plan of the world, makes no alteration as to the matter before us. For if civil magistrates could make the sanction of their laws take place without interposing at all after they had passed them; without a trial and the formality of an executioner: if they were able to make their laws execute themselves, or every offender to execute them upon himself, we should be just in the same sense under their government then as we are now, but in a much higher degree and more perfect manner."—*Butler's Analogy,* Chap. 2.

think, precede the latter, in order to fortify the mind against those sceptical suspicions which the irregularities and disorders of the present state of things are apt to obtrude on a gloomy imagination. I have accordingly already hinted in part at this argument; but for the sake of connexion it may be proper in this place to recapitulate the following particulars.

In considering the evidences of benevolent design in the universe, it was before remarked, that, as our first ideas of the moral attributes of God are derived from our own moral perceptions, so it is from the consideration of these that the strongest proofs of his attributes arise.

It was also observed that the distinction between right and wrong is apprehended by the mind to be eternal and immutable, no less than the distinction between mathematical truth and falsehood; and that of course to argue from our own moral judgments to the administration of the Deity, cannot be justly censured as a rash extension to the Divine Nature of suggestions resulting from the arbitrary constitution of our own minds.

The power we have of conceiving this distinction is one of the most remarkable of those which raise us above the brutes; and the sense of obligation which it involves possesses a distinguished preeminence over all our other principles of action. To act in conformity to our sense of rectitude is plainly the highest excellence which our nature is capable of attaining; nor can we avoid extending the same rule of estimation to all intelligent beings whatever.

Besides these conclusions with respect to the Divine attributes, (which seem to be implied in our very perception of moral distinctions) there are others perfectly agreeable to them, which continually force themselves on the mind in the exercise of our moral judgments, both with respect to our own conduct and that of other men. The reverence which we feel due to the admonitions of conscience,—the sense of merit and demerit which accompanies our good and bad actions,—the warm interest we take in the fortunes of the virtuous,—the indignation we feel at the occasional triumph

of successful villany,—all imply a secret conviction of the moral administration of the universe.

An examination, however, of the ordinary course of human affairs adds greatly to the force of these considerations,* and furnishes a proof from the fact, that, notwithstanding the seemingly promiscuous distribution of happiness and misery in this life, the reward of virtue and the punishment of vice are the great objects of all the general laws by which the world is governed. The

* "From the natural course of things vicious actions are to a great degree actually punished as mischievous to society. And beside the penalties actually inflicted in such cases, the fears and apprehensions of it in case of a discovery operate frequently as no inconsiderable punishment on those who escape the vengeance of human laws. That those vices which are destructive of society should be punished by the magistrate, arises from the very existence of society. And as the political union is the necessary result of the nature of man, the penalties by which it restrains crimes may be considered as a part of the order of Providence, though acting by the instrumentality of man. Nor is it a valid objection to this reasoning that good actions, and such as are really beneficial to the public, are sometimes punished, as in the case of unjust persecution; and that vicious actions are frequently rewarded; for, in the first place, when this occurs it is matter of accident, and does not arise necessarily from the established order of things, as the penalties annexed to certain vices result necessarily from the constitution of society; and, secondly, when good actions are punished, and bad ones rewarded, it is owing to some accidental misconception of their tendency, the former being supposed erroneously to be hurtful and the latter beneficial to the public. The general proposition, therefore, holds without any thing that can be opposed to it on the other hand, that the punishment of certain vices results necessarily from the circumstances in which Providence has placed mankind.

"In the natural course of things virtue *as such* is actually rewarded, and vice *as such* punished. Besides the agreeable and disagreeable effects of virtue and vice on men's own minds, the course of the world turns in some measure upon the approbation and disapprobation of them *as such* in others. The sense of well and ill doing, the presages of conscience, the love of good characters and dislike of bad ones, honor, shame, resentment, gratitude,—all these, considered in themselves and in their effects, afford manifest real instances of virtue *as such* naturally favored, and of vice *as such* discountenanced, more or less, in the daily course of human life. That God has given us a moral constitution may be urged most justly as a proof of our being under his moral government. But that he has placed us in a condition which gives this nature scope to operate, and in which it does unavoidably operate, by influencing mankind so to act as to favor and reward virtue and punish vice; this is not the same, but an additional proof of his moral government, for it is an instance of it. The first is a proof that he will finally favor and support virtue effectually. The second is an example of his favoring and supporting it at present in some degree.

"Besides the actual *effects* of virtue and vice in this life, there is something very remarkable in their necessary *tendencies*; and in so far as these tendencies lie open to our observation, they afford a proof from the fact of the moral government under which we are placed. The actual consequences of virtue and of vice are indeed very conspicuous; but they bear little proportion to what they would produce if their *tendencies* were not restrained by accidental circumstances. Good and bad men, for example, would be much more rewarded and punished as such, were it not that justice is often artificially eluded, that characters are not known, and many who would thus favor virtue and discourage vice are hindered from doing so from accidental causes."

The foregoing note is little more than an abridgment of some observations of Butler's in his chapter *On the Moral Government of God*.—See *Butler's Analogy*, p. 73. Third Edit.

disorders in the meantime which, in such a world as ours, cannot fail to arise in particular instances, when they are compared with our natural sense of good and of ill desert, afford a presumption that in a future state the moral government which we see begun here will be carried into complete execution.

CHAPTER FOURTH.

PRELIMINARY INQUIRY INTO THE PRINCIPLES OF NATURAL RELIGION.

OF A FUTURE STATE.

THE consideration of the Divine attributes naturally leads our thoughts to the future prospects of man, and to the sequel of that plan of moral government which we see plainly begun here, and which our own moral constitution, joined to our conclusions concerning the perfections of God, afford us the strongest intimations will be more completely unfolded in some subsequent stage of our being. The doctrine indeed of a future state seems to be in a great measure implied in every system of religious belief; for why were we rendered capable of elevating our thoughts to the Deity, if all our hopes are to terminate here? Or why were we furnished with powers which range through the infinity of space and time, if our lot is to be the same with that of the beasts which perish? But although the doctrine of a future state be implied in every scheme of religion, the truths of religion are not necessarily implied in the doctrine of a future state. Even absolute atheism does not destroy all the arguments for the immortality of the soul. Whether it be owing to an overruling intelligence or not, it is a *fact* which no man can deny, that there are general laws which regulate the course of human affairs, and that even in this world we see manifest indications of a connexion between virtue and happiness. Why may not *necessity* continue that existence it at first gave birth to; and why may not the connexion between virtue and happiness subsist for ever?

SECTION I.

Of the Argument for a Future State derived from the Nature of Mind.

IN collecting the various presumptions which the light of nature affords for a future state, too much stress has commonly been laid on the soul's immateriality.* After having proved, or attempted to prove, that it has no quality in common with matter; in particular, that it is not extended or divisible, the advocates for this opinion have concluded, with all the confidence of demonstration, that what is not compounded nor made up of parts cannot be dissolved, and, therefore, that the human soul is essentially and necessarily immortal. "Et cum simplex natura animi esset, neque haberet in se quidquam admistum dispar sui, atque dissimile, non posse eum dividi; quod si non possit, non posse interire." †

But this argument, I am afraid, supposing it were logical, proves too much; for it concludes as strongly against the possibility of the soul's being *created* as *dissolved;* and accordingly, we find that almost all the ancient philosophers who believed in a future state maintained also the doctrine of the soul's preexistence. Nay, some of them seem to have considered the latter point as still better established than the former. In the *Phædon* of Plato, in which Socrates is introduced as stating to his friends, immediately before his execution, the proofs of a future state, Cebes, who is one of the speakers in the dialogue, admits that he has been successful in establishing the doctrine of the soul's preexistence, but insists on further proofs of the possibility of its surviving the body.

When we consider, however, with attention the argu-

* On this point I quite agree with Locke. "All the great ends of morality and religion are well enough secured without philosophical proof of the soul's immateriality; since it is evident, that He who made us at the beginning to subsist here, sensible intelligent beings, and for several years continued us in such a state, can restore us to the like state of sensibility in another world, and make us capable there to receive the retribution he has designed to men, according to their doings in this life," &c. &c.—See the Chapter of his Essay, *on the Extent of Human Knowledge.—Locke's Works*, Vol. II. p. 332.

† Cicero De Senectute, 21.

ment from the soul's immateriality in favor of its immortality, it appears to be by no means conclusive; for although we have the strongest evidence (as I shall afterwards show) that there is a thinking and sentient principle within us essentially distinct from matter, yet we have no direct evidence from the fact, of the possibility of this principle exercising its various faculties and powers in a separate state from the body. On the contrary, the union between the two, while it subsists, is evidently of the most intimate nature. We have reason to believe that, in the exercise of all the intellectual powers, the soul *acts* somehow or other on the body; for we find that when we have long been exerting any particular faculty we are conscious of fatigue, and are relieved by giving the mind some other species of employment. We know, too, from what happens in consequence of intoxication, madness, and other diseases, that a certain condition of the body is necessary to the intellectual operations; and the same thing appears from the gradual decay of the faculties as we approach to old age. This last fact is indeed not universal. We meet with some old men who retain their faculties unimpaired to the last; and others cut off in the vigor of life, who have displayed the usual force of their understandings under the pressure of some disease which was in a few moments to terminate their existence. But surely the more common fact is, that the body and mind seem to decay together; and the few exceptions that occur only prove that there are some diseases fatal to life which do not injure those parts of the body with which the intellectual operations are more immediately connected.

I would not be understood by these observations to give the smallest countenance to the scheme of materialism; a scheme which is not only dangerous, but which I have shown, in the *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, to be absurd and incomprehensible. Indeed it is self-evident, that, as our notions of body and mind are merely relative, as we know the one only by its sensible qualities, and the other by the operations of which we are conscious, to say of mind that it is not material, is to

affirm a proposition, the truth of which is involved in the only conceptions of matter and mind that we are capable of forming.

The doubts that have been suggested with respect to the essential distinction between matter and mind derive all their plausibility from the habits of inattention we acquire in earlier infancy to our mental operations. It was plainly the intention of nature that our thoughts should be habitually directed to things external; and accordingly the bulk of mankind are not only disposed to overlook the mental phenomena, but are incapable of that degree of reflection which is necessary for their examination. Hence it is, that, when we begin to study our own internal constitution, we find the facts it presents to us so very intimately associated in our conceptions with the qualities of matter, that it is impossible for us to draw distinctly and steadily the line between them; and that when mind and matter are concerned in the same event, mind is either entirely overlooked, or is regarded only as an accessary to matter, and as dependent upon it for its existence. The tendency which all men have to refer the sensation of *color* to the objects by which it is excited may serve to illustrate the manner in which the qualities of mind and body come to be blended in our apprehensions. We may add, as a further illustration of the same thing, the reference which, in the case of physical events, we naturally make to matter, of *power*, or *force*, or *energy*, which is an attribute of mind, and can exist in mind only. The same observation might be exemplified in numberless other instances, of which I shall at present mention only one,—the confusion between the terms *sensation* and *perception* which has produced the ideal theory. In general, the bulk of mankind are so engrossed with external objects, that they overlook entirely their own mental operations, and even lose the capacity of attending to them; insomuch that the mind is compared by Locke to the eye, which sees every object around us, but cannot see itself. This tendency of our nature is to be counteracted only by habits of reflection, of which very few men are capable, and which, unless we are

led by natural curiosity or by accident, to cultivate them in very early youth, are I believe perfectly unattainable. Such habits are however absolutely necessary to enable us to make any solid progress in the Philosophy of Mind, and to prevent us from being misled by the analogy of matter in explaining the intellectual phenomena. In proportion, too, as they become familiar to us, they lead us insensibly, without any long process of reasoning, to draw the line between the operations of mind and the qualities of matter; and to perceive, that of all the truths we know the existence of mind is the most certain. Even the system of Berkeley, concerning the nonexistence of matter, is far more conceivable than that matter is the *only* substance existing in the universe.

For the errors which the vulgar are apt to commit on these subjects, the habits of inattention already mentioned afford perhaps more than a sufficient apology. But it is painful to remark in philosophers of eminence, who seem to have, in a considerable degree, surmounted these habits, a disposition to conform themselves to the grossest apprehensions of the multitude, rather than give any countenance to the sublime and elevating doctrine of the immateriality of the soul. Thus Mr. Hume, who has so accurately stated in the case of the secondary qualities of matter, the absurdity of referring to body what can only exist in a sentient being, has yet not scrupled to speak of "that little agitation of the brain which we call thought." Surely if it be absurd to speak of matter being *cold* or *hot*, *blue* or *green*, it is at least as great an absurdity to speak of matter, *thinking*, *remembering*, or *reasoning*.

If these remarks be well founded, the prejudices which give support to the scheme of materialism are not likely to be cured by any metaphysical reasonings, how clear or conclusive soever, so long as the judgment continues to be warped by such obstinate associations as have just been mentioned. A habit of reflecting on the laws of thought, as they are to be collected from our own consciousness, together with a habit of resisting those illusions of the fancy which lead superficial inquirers to substitute analogies for facts, will gradually

enable us to make the phenomena of matter and those of mind distinct objects of attention, and as soon as this happens, the absurdity of materialism must appear intuitively obvious.

It affords, I think, some confirmation of these reasonings, that all the attempts which have been made to explain any of the operations of mind by the analogy of material phenomena have involved their authors in absurdities and contradictions; and that it is only since the time when Descartes drew the line distinctly between these two objects of our knowledge * that any considerable progress in the Philosophy of Mind has been made. On the other hand, every step which has been gained in this study has undermined some of the prejudices from which materialism derives its support. The old theory, for example, with respect to perception, was extremely favorable to the supposition of the soul's materiality. Philosophers apprehended that the qualities of external objects were perceived by means of images of these qualities, transmitted from the object to the mind through the medium of the senses, and that there was no idea in the understanding which was not originally conveyed to it by this channel. Thus the mind was conceived to receive all its ideas from without, and to be originally nothing more than a repository for receiving the images or *species* of surrounding objects; or, as the language of these philosophers seems at other times rather to imply, a tablet fitted to receive passively those impressions or stamps which are made on it by the various qualities of matter. These *images*, or these *impressions*, furnished the whole materials of its knowledge, which it might analyze or compound, but beyond which it could create nothing.

When, however, we lay aside theory, and attend to the fact, it appears, with unquestionable evidence, that

* "Les Méditations Métaphysiques de Descartes parurent en 1641. C'étoit de tous ses ouvrages, celui qu'il estimoit le plus. Ce qui caractérise surtout cet ouvrage, c'est qu'il contient sa fameuse démonstration de Dieu, démonstration si répétée depuis, adoptée par les uns et rejettée par les autres; et *qu'il est le premier où la distinction de l'esprit et de la matière soit parfaitement développée:* Car avant Descartes on n'avoit encore bien approfondi les preuves philosophiques de la spiritualité de l'âme."—*Eloge de Descartes*, par M. Thomas, Note 20.

our perception of external objects is obtained by the intervention of sensations, to which the qualities of these objects bear no more resemblance than the words of a language do to the objects they denote; and that the only difference which we are able to discover between the two cases is, that in the one the connexion between the sign and the thing signified is established by nature, and in the other by custom alone. By the constitution of our nature indeed we are disposed in most instances to overlook the sign, and to attend to the thing signified; in consequence of which the qualities of matter engross our attention much more, and are much more familiar to us than the sensations of which we are conscious, and by the intervention of which our perceptions of these qualities are obtained. It is easy, however, to conceive that the mind might have been so formed as to possess all the sensations which belong to it in its present state, without having had any perception of the qualities of external objects. And it may be even affirmed that it might have arrived at the exercise of most of its intellectual faculties, without having had any notion of the existence of a material world.

For the illustration of this proposition I must refer to the Philosophy of the Human mind;* and whoever considers it with attention, and reflects on the consequences to which it leads, will (if I am not much deceived) be fully sensible of the absurdity which the scheme of materialism involves.

It is not, however, on an examination of the human intellect alone that I would rest the decision of this question. Besides the evidences for the existence of mind which our own consciousness affords, and those which are exhibited by other men and by the lower animals, there are many presented to us by every part of the material world. We are so constituted that every change we see in it suggests to us the notion of an efficient cause; and every combination of means conspiring to an end suggests to us the notion of intelligence. And accordingly the various changes which

* Vol. i. Chap. i. Sect. 4.

take place in nature, and the order and beauty of the universe, have in every age been regarded as the effects of power and wisdom; that is, of the operation of mind. In the material world, therefore, as well as in the case of animated nature, we are led to conceive body as a passive subject, and mind as the moving and governing agent. And it deserves attention, that in the former class of phenomena mind appears to move and arrange the parts of matter without being united with it, as in the case of animal life.

There are various circumstances which render it highly probable that the union between soul and body which takes place in our present state, so far from being essential to the exercise of our powers and faculties, was intended to limit the sphere of our information; and to prevent us from acquiring, in this early stage of our being, too clear a view of the constitution and government of the universe. Indeed, when we reflect on the difference between the operations of mind and the qualities of matter, it appears much more wonderful that they should be so intimately united as we find them actually to be, than to suppose that the former may exist in a conscious and intelligent state when separated from the latter.*

It may perhaps contribute somewhat to reconcile the imagination to this doctrine when we consider that the substance of which the body is composed is perpetually changing, so that during the life of a man all the particles which go to the combination must have frequently undergone a complete renovation; and yet during all this time we retain a distinct consciousness of our personal identity. This fact is surely not a little favorable to the supposition of mind being a principle essentially distinct from matter, and capable of existing when its connexion with the body is dissolved. I do not say that it furnishes any logical argument on the subject distinct from that already stated; but in the present inquiry *arguments* are less necessary than *illustrations*

* "Mihi quidem, naturam animi intuenti, multo difficilior occurrit cogitatio multoque obscurior, qualis animus in corpore sit, tamquam alienæ domui, quam qualis, cum exierit et in liberum cœlum, quasi domum suam, venerit."—*Tusc. Disp.* Liber i. C. 22.

to aid our apprehensions, in combating those associations which in our early years lead us so to blend the qualities of body and mind, that we find it difficult ever after to make them separate objects of attention. An old English writer (Mr. John Smith of Cambridge) has placed the remark now hinted at in some new and striking points of view.

"If our souls were nothing else than a complex of fluid atoms, how should we be continually roving and sliding from ourselves, and soon forget what we once were? The *new matter* that would come in to fill up that vacuity which the *old* had made by its departure would never know what the old were, nor what that should be that would succeed that. That new pilgrim and stranger like soul would always be ignorant of what the other before it knew, and we should be wholly some other bulk of being than we were before, as Plotinus hath excellently observed, Enn. iv. 1. 7, C. 5. It was a famous speech of wise Heraclitus, *Εἰς τὸν αὐτὸν ποταμὸν δὶς ἐκ ἂν ἐμβαίης*,—'A man cannot enter twice into the same river;' by which he was want symbolically to express the constant flux of matter, which is the most unstable thing that may be. And if Epicurus in his Philosophy could free his heap of refined atoms, which it makes the soul to be, from this inconstant and flitting nature, and teach us how it could be *μόνιμόν τι*, 'some stable and immutable thing,' always resting entire while it is in the body; though we should thank him for such a goodly conceit as this is, yet we would make no doubt but it might as well be able to preserve itself from dissolution and dissipation *out* of this gross body as *in* it; seeing it is no more secured from the constant impulses of that more gross matter which is restlessly moving up and down *in* the body than it is *out* of it; and yet for all that, we should take the leave to ask Tully's question with his sober disdain, *Quid obsecro, terrâne tibi aut hoc nebuloso et caliginoso cœno aut sata aut concreta videtur tanta vis memoriæ?* Such a jewel as this is too precious to be found in a dunghill. Mere matter could never thus stretch forth its feeble force and spread itself over all its own former preexistencies. We may as well

suppose this dull and heavy earth we tread upon to know how long it hath dwelt in this part of the universe that now it doth, and what variety of creatures have in all past ages sprung forth from it, and all those occurrences and events which have all this time happened upon it." *

What, then, shall we say of the effects of disease and old age on the mind? That they are convincing proofs of its intimate union with the body, and of the dependence of our intellectual operations at present on our corporeal organs, cannot be disputed. But they surely

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* Select Discourses by John Smith of Cambridge, pp. 83, 84.

I have, in another work, made some remarks on the Argument against the Immateriality of the Soul which Priestley and others have founded on the common apprehensions of mankind, as manifested in their modes of speaking on the subject.—*Spiritus, πνεῦμα*, Ghost, &c. *(Phil. Essays*, Ess. V. ch. ii.)

The same metaphorical language, with respect to the nature of mind, occurs in one of the most classical didactic poems in our language.

> "There is they say (and I believe there is)
> A spark within us of th' immortal *fire*,
> That animates and moulds the grosser frame,
> And when the body sinks escapes to Heaven,
> Its native seat, and mixes with the gods.
> Meanwhile this heavenly *particle* pervades
> The mortal elements, &c. &c.
>
> *Art of Preserving Health.*

I have quoted these lines not on account of their own merit, but as an introduction to what appears to me to be a very exceptionable remark on them, by a writer for whose taste and critical judgment I entertain a high respect. "The theory," he observes, "of the union of a spiritual principle with the gross corporeal substance, is that which Armstrong adopts as the basis of his reasonings. He evidently confounds, however, *(as all writers on this system do)* matter of great subtlety with what is not matter—or spirit."

See an ingenious and elegant Essay prefixed to the edition of Armstrong's Poems, published by J. Aikin, M. D.

If this observation had been confined to the passage of Armstrong here referred to, I should not have been disposed to object to it, as I think it completely justified by some expressions which occur in the next paragraph, particularly by what is there said of the various functions which are performed

> "By subtle fluids pour'd through subtle tubes;"

Of some of which fluids we are afterwards told that they

> "Are lost in thinking, and dissolved in air."

It is the parenthetical clause alone (distinguished by italics) which has led me to point out to my readers the foregoing criticism of Dr. Aikin's, and in this clause I must be allowed to say, that the greatest injustice is inadvertently done to many of our best philosophers, both ancient and modern.

To this note I shall only add the following query:—

Whence has arisen that disposition which materialists of every description have shown to subtilize, as far as was possible for the imagination to do so, the atoms which they conceived to produce by their organization the phenomena of thought?

> "Quintessence d'atôme, extrait de la lumière!"

Might not a plausible argument against their opinion be deduced from this *acknowledged fact*, by employing a mode of reasoning somewhat analogous to the *method of exhaustions* among the Greek geometricians?

do not amount to a proof that the soul is necessarily extinguished when the body is dissolved. "Suppose a person," says Cicero, "to have been educated from his infancy in a chamber, where he enjoyed no opportunity of seeing external objects, but through a small chink in the window shutter, would he not be apt to consider this chink as essential to his vision, and would it not be difficult to persuade him that his prospects would be enlarged by demolishing the walls of his prison?" Admitting that this analogy is founded merely on fancy, yet, if it be granted that there is no absurdity in the supposition, it furnishes a sufficient answer to all the reasonings which have been stated against the possibility of the soul's separate existence from the consideration of its present union with the body.

In order to be completely sensible of the force of this observation, it is necessary to attend to the distinction between the mind and its organs of sense; or, in other words, between the percipient and his organs of perception; a distinction for the illustration of which I shall again avail myself of the language of Cicero. "Nos enim ne nunc quidem *oculis* cernimus ea quæ videmus; neque enim est ullus sensus in corpore, sed, ut non solum physici docent, verum etiam medici, qui ista aperta et patefacta viderunt, viæ quasi quædam sunt ad oculos, ad aures, ad nares à sede animi perforatæ. Itaque sæpe aut cogitatione aut aliquâ vi morbi impediti, apertis atque integris et oculis, et auribus, nec videmus, nec audimus: ut facile intelligi possit animum et videre et audire, non eas partes, quæ quasi fenestræ sunt animi: quibus tamen sentire nihil queat mens, nisi id agat et adsit. Quid, quod eâdem mente res dissimillimas comprehendimus, ut colorem, saporem, calorem, odorem, sonum? quæ numquam quinque nuntiis animus cognosceret, nisi ad eum omnia referrentur, et is omnium judex solus esset. Atque ea profectò tum multo puriora et dilucidiora cernentur, cum, quo natura fert, liber animus pervenerit. Nam nunc quidem, quamquam foramina illa, quæ patent ad animum a corpore, callidissimo artificio natura fabricata est, tamen terrenis concretisque corporibus sunt intersepta quodammodo: cum autem nihil erit præter ani-

mum, nulla res objecta impediet, quo minus percipiat, quale quidque sit." *

In support of the foregoing conclusions many strong arguments might be derived from an accurate examination and analysis of our ideas of matter and its qualities; but as such speculations would necessarily engage me in a discussion of some principles, about which philosophers are not as yet perfectly agreed, I shall content myself with barely hinting at my ideas on this subject, without aiming at a complete illustration of the argument.

It is well known to those who are at all acquainted with the present state of natural philosophy, that a new theory with respect to matter was proposed not many years ago by the late celebrated Father Boscovich. According to this theory we are taught that the quality of impenetrability, which commonly enters into our idea of matter, does not belong to it, and that the qualities of hardness and softness have always a reference to the force we employ in compressing bodies. As what is hard to an infant may be soft to a man, so what is hard when compared with human strength may be soft when compared with that of more powerful beings. When we have exerted all our force in attempting to compress

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* Tuscul. Disputationum, Liber Primus, c. 20.

The same idea which runs through this passage has been adopted and placed in some new lights by an old English poet, whose works are less known than they deserve to be, Sir John Davies, Attorney General in Ireland under the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

"So though the clouds eclipse the sun's fair light,
Yet from his face they do not take one beam;
So have our eyes their perfect power of sight
Even when they look into a troubled stream.

Then these defects in sense's organs be
Not in the soul, nor in her working might;
She cannot lose her perfect power to see,
Though mists and clouds do choke her window light.

These imperfections, then, we must impute
Not to the agent but the instrument:
We must not blame Apollo but his lute,
If false accords from her false strings be sent.

As a good harper striken far in years,
Into whose cunning hands the gout doth fall,
All his old crotchets in his brain he bears,
But on his harp plays ill, or not at all.

* * *

But if Apollo takes his gout away,
That he his nimble fingers may apply,
Apollo's self will envy at his play,
And all the world applaud his minstrelsy."

a body, and find that we cannot diminish its volume any further, the resistance it opposes to our efforts is not an absolute incompressibility, but an incompressibility relative to our strength. With a greater force it might be reduced within a volume still smaller, and with a force sufficiently great its volume might be made to vanish into nothing. Matter, therefore, it is concluded, is nothing but a power of resistance, and there is no such thing in nature as atoms perfectly hard and absolutely impenetrable.

With respect to this theory of Boscovich's I shall not venture to give any decided opinion. That it is attended with some difficulties must I think be granted by its most zealous advocates; but, on the other hand, it cannot be denied that he has been successful in establishing three propositions. 1. That the supposition of impenetrable particles is liable to strong, if not to insurmountable objections. 2. That there are no facts which afford any direct evidence of it. And 3. That there are some striking facts which favor the opposite hypothesis. In proof of the last proposition it is sufficient to appeal to those experiments which have led modern philosophers to conclude, that all bodies exert a repulsive power, extending to a certain distance from their surfaces, and that the common effects which are attributed to contact and collision are produced by this repulsion. We know that when a convex lens is laid on a plane glass a very great compressive power may be employed without producing actual contact; and we also know, from some electrical phenomena, that the links of a metallic chain are not in contact with each other, even when the chain is stretched by very heavy weights. The same phenomena, therefore, *may* be produced by repulsion which we commonly ascribe to contact; and if so, why not attribute to the same cause *all* effects of the same nature? Accordingly, Boscovich denies the existence of impenetrable particles, and supposes matter to be composed of unextended elements (mere mathematical points) exerting powers of repulsion, so as to produce the same appearances which would take place on the common supposition. On this doctrine with respect to

matter, or at least on a doctrine extremely similar to it, Dr. Priestley has founded his reasonings against the immateriality of the soul; and it is from these premises he has attempted to show that the extinction of the sentient and thinking principle must necessarily result from the dissolution of the body.

But it appears to me, that, if Boscovich's theory be admitted, instead of establishing materialism, it destroys completely the foundation of that system. It is evident that, according to Boscovich's idea, all that we know of the impenetrability of matter amounts to this, that there exist certain repulsive forces which counteract those compressing forces we ourselves exert. Now, if this is the case, we must ascribe these forces to something analogous to that of which we are conscious in ourselves. In other words, we must ascribe them to the agency of mind; for active force is an attribute of mind just as much as sensation or thought. Matter, therefore, is not a thing which has a separate and independent existence, but an *effect* which is continued by the constant agency of Divine Power.

I formerly endeavoured to show that, in the phenomena of gravitation, and in general in the changes which take place in the state of the material universe, the incessant agency of the Deity, or of some subordinate mind, is indispensably necessary to account for the effects. And this seems now to be the opinion of all the best philosophers. But, according to Boscovich's theory, the constant agency of the Deity is carried much further than any philosopher has hitherto apprehended; for it appears to be necessary to account for even the solidity or impenetrability of matter; that quality which is generally considered as constituting the very essence of matter, or at least to be inseparable from the idea of it. The ancient philosophers, even those of them who were theists, believed matter to be eternal as well as mind. Modern theists in general suppose matter to have been originally created by the Deity, but to have derived from him a separate and independent existence. But, according to Boscovich's theory, the *existence* of matter is a constant effect of Divine Power; and, if this pow-

er were a moment withheld, the whole material universe would vanish into nothing. So far, therefore, from leading to materialism (in the common sense of that word) Boscovich's theory, if accurately conceived and followed out to its necessary consequences, represents mind as the only independent existence we know, and matter as a mere *effect* dependent on its operation.

What then shall we suppose happens at death? Our connexion with that system of appearances called the material world plainly ceases; but surely no presumption arises from this against the permanent existence of our minds. On the contrary the presumption is strongly in favor of their permanent existence, and that death only lifts up the veil which conceals from our mortal eyes the invisible world. Death does not extinguish mind, and leave the material world existing as before. On the contrary, death annihilates the material universe to our senses, and prepares our minds for some new and unknown state of being.* The philosophers who believed matter to be uncreated and eternal might be pardoned for sometimes running into the absurdity of supposing that it is the only existence in nature, and that the phenomena of which we are conscious result from bodily organization. But *first* to maintain that matter is merely a system of forces, and *then* to conclude that there is no such thing as mind, is such a tissue of inconsistency and contradiction, or rather such a pitiful juggle upon words, as is scarcely to be paralleled in the history of philosophy.

I have already declined giving any opinion for or against Boscovich's theory, and shall only remark at present, as a circumstance that furnishes a most pleasing field of speculation to the human mind, that, on questions of so interesting a nature as those which relate to the existence of a Deity and a future state, the kind Author of our being has not left our belief to depend on the precarious issue of philosophical controversies; for

* This, as far as I am able to conjecture from my recollection of his conversation, was the opinion of my late amiable and excellent friend Dr. James Hutton,—so ingenious and original in his writings as a geologist and natural philosopher, but often so dark and even incomprehensible as a metaphysician. It is well known that Dr. Hutton had adopted a theory with respect to matter approaching very nearly to those of Boscovich and Priestley.

whatever theory we adopt, whether right or wrong, we are unavoidably led to the same conclusions; and frequently those very hypotheses that have been advanced to unhinge the common opinions of mankind have furnished new arguments in support of the principles they were intended to subvert.

After what has been already said, it is scarcely necessary for me to add, that the scope of the foregoing observations is to establish the probability, not only of the future existence of the soul, but of its conscious identity and individuality. Indeed, unless this be granted, the question about the distinct natures of mind and of body, and the possibility of the former surviving the dissolution of the latter, seems to me of no consequence whatever.

It is, however, not a little extraordinary that a considerable number of philosophers, after admitting the distinction between mind and matter, have yet supposed the soul to be a *ray* or an *emanation* from the Deity, which at the dissolution of the body will be again absorbed into the great source from which it proceeded. This seems to have been the opinion of many of the ancient stoics; and a similar idea has been adopted by some philosophers in modern times, who have compared the soul, when joined to the body, to a small portion of the sea enclosed in a vial; and when separated from it, to the same water, confounded and intermixed, by the breaking of the vial which contained it, with the ocean, from whence it was at first taken.

But this doctrine, though supported by great names, is not more pernicious in its tendency than it is absurd and unintelligible. The distinct consciousness we retain of our personal identity, under all the various changes which the body suffers during our progress through life, is the most important fact in the history of the human mind, and it is that which affords the strongest of all presages of its future destination. To speak of different minds being blended together and lost in one general mass of being, is to employ a form of words to which it is absolutely impossible to annex a meaning, and is one of the many absurdities into which in-

genious men have been led, by indulging their fancy in groundless analogies between intellectual and material phenomena. It is in truth a language which is infinitely more unphilosophical than that employed by the materialists, who suppose thinking to result from bodily organization, and the whole man to perish at the moment of death. In their practical tendency I can see no difference between the two opinions.

I have now stated all that I think it necessary for me to offer in illustration of the argument for a future state derived from the nature of mind,—an argument which, although it seems to me to be highly favorable to our future hopes, I have avoided to urge with the confidence of demonstrative certainty. In entering upon the subject, I observed that those writers who, from the immateriality of the soul, conclude that it is physically and necessarily immortal, have pushed the conclusion too far; and that the proper use of the speculation concerning the nature of mind is not to establish the *truth* of the point in question, but to refute the objections which have been urged against the possibility of the proposition. Although our knowledge of the nature of mind may not be sufficient to afford us any positive argument on the subject, yet, if it can be shown that the dissolution of the body does not necessarily infer the extinction of the soul; and still more, if it can be shown that the presumption is in favor of the contrary supposition, the moral proofs of a future retribution will meet with a more easy reception, when the doctrine is freed from the metaphysical difficulties which it has been apprehended to involve. It is in this moderate form that the argument from the light of nature is stated by Butler; and the considerations he mentions prove fully, not only that no presumption against a future state can be collected from the dissolution of the body, but that the contrary supposition is more agreeable to the general analogy of nature. For establishing this conclusion important hints may be collected from Clarke's Letters to Dodwell, where, although the reasoning may be insufficient to demonstrate the proposition which the author had in view, it affords at least a satisfactory

refutation of all those cavils against a future state which sceptics have founded on the supposition of our thinking powers being the result of our bodily organization.

Before proceeding to examine the moral evidences for a future state, it may be of use to remark, in further confirmation of some of the foregoing reasonings, that there is nothing *absurd* in the supposition, nor contrary to the analogy of those laws by which we know the universe to be governed. There is nothing even contrary to the analogy we have already experienced in the former history of our own being. The change which takes place in the state of the infant at the moment of its birth may perhaps be analogous to the change we are destined to undergo at the moment of our dissolution. And it is probable, that, if an infant in the womb were capable of reflecting on its condition, it would be as apprehensive of the consequences of birth as we are of those of death. Some beautiful illustrations of this idea are to be found in Bishop Butler, and indeed in various other authors, both ancient and modern. It is touched upon with a pathetic simplicity by Sir John Davies, in the poem which I already quoted; and Marcus Antoninus avails himself of it as an argument to reconcile us to the appointed order of nature in the termination of human life.

"It becomes a wise man neither to be inconsiderate, impetuous, or ostentatiously contemptuous about death, but to await the season of it as one of the operations of Nature. As you are now awaiting the season when the fœtus shall come out of the womb of your wife, thus await the season when your soul shall fall out of these its teguments." *

The transformation of insects has been brought in aid of the same pleasing idea; and although, when taken by itself, no stress can be laid upon it as a philosophical argument, yet, when joined to other considerations, it will not appear without some force to those who have directed their attention to the analogies of nature. It shows at least that the supposition is not quite *anoma-*

* Marc. Anton. Lib. ix. c. 3.—See also Seneca's Epistle, end of Letter 102.

lous, when compared with what we actually know of the works of God; and it accords happily with the numberless instances in which the instincts and the economy of the lower animals seem to have been intended to typify to the fancy the arts of human life, and the arrangements of human affairs.

Dr. Butler himself has not thought it unworthy of his notice, and Dr. Ferguson, in the following passage, has adorned it, not only with the recommendation of his eloquence, but almost with the colors of poetry.

"It has been observed that the Author of Nature appears to delight in variety; and we may now add, not merely in the variety of description that may serve to distinguish quiescent natures, but in the variety of steps also incident to the progress and continued existence of one and the same being.

"Such are the successive variations exhibited in every part of the vegetable, the animal, and the intellectual kingdom. Among these there are examples of progression coming in one line or direction to an end, but renewed in a different one. The butterfly originates in a species of egg, which is deposited on the leaf of a plant, from which the animal after he is hatched may derive his nourishment. He lives at first in the form of a worm or caterpillar. He enjoys the food that is provided for him, and, as far as we are qualified to observe, bears no prognostic of any further destination. But, having grown to a certain dimension, he becomes restless in his place, and removes to some place of retreat, in which he may repose and end his life undisturbed. He mounts to some height from the ground, and makes himself fast, while his animal functions are suspended, or apparently cease. In the mean time he takes a new form, and, cased with an inflexible crust, becomes what the naturalists have called an aurelia or chrysalis, without any power of local motion, or any appearance of life.

"But to the changes which he has thus undergone succeeds in the proper season a change still further removed from his original state. He awakes from his torpid condition, breaks the crust of the chrysalis in

which he was cased, is borne aloft upon wings variegated in the pride of most beautiful colors; and thus from a reptile that crept on the ground, or devoured the grosser part of a leaf on which he was hatched, he comes to perform all his movements in the air, and scarcely touches a plant but to suck from its flower the finest part of the juices; he sports in the sun, and displays the activity of a new life, during the heat and the light of noon." *

SECTION II.

Of the Evidences for a Future State arising from the Human Constitution, and from the Circumstances in which Man is placed.

THE presumptions hitherto suggested in proof of a future state, and which are drawn from the *nature* of mind, form what is commonly called the *metaphysical* argument on this subject. Those which I am now to state form what is called the *moral* argument. They are drawn chiefly from a comparison of the constitution of man with the circumstances in which he is placed at present; and when combined together they form a mass of evidence incomparably more satisfactory and impressive than any conviction arising from metaphysical disquisitions.

The field of speculation which the *moral argument* for a future state opens to the mind is so extensive, or rather so boundless, that in the following remarks I must confine my attention to a few of those particulars which appear to myself to be more peculiarly important. Among these the most obvious, and to the bulk of mankind one of the most striking, is the presumption arising from

(1.) The natural *desire* of immortality, and the anticipations of futurity inspired by *hope*.

These desires and anticipations are not to be confounded with the animal principle of *self-preservation*, nor even with that *love of life* which is natural to every

* Principles of Moral and Political Science, Vol. I. pp. 324, 325

man who is in good health and spirits, and whose situation in the world is easy and comfortable. The instinctive principle of self-preservation operates with as little reflection on our part as the winking of our eyelids when the organ of sight is threatened with a sudden injury, or as the effort we make to preserve the balance of the body when we are in danger of falling. And as for the cool and deliberate love of life, it is founded chiefly on our attachment to sensual enjoyments, or to those frivolous distinctions that are connected with our present condition; whereas the desire of *immortality* arises from our *rational nature*, from our ardent aspirings at excellence and perfection, and from the consciousness we have of the indefinite progress of which our powers are capable. Indeed, the most effectual of all remedies against that inordinate love of life which interferes with the discharge of our duties, is a firm conviction of the soul's immortality; that conviction which can alone enable a rational mind to "smile at the dagger and defy its point." Even in those men who are the most sceptical on this subject, when they sacrifice life in a worthy cause, and from a regard to the obligation of conscience, they are probably influenced at the moment (perhaps unknowingly to themselves, for we are not always acquainted with the real motives of our own actions) by some indistinct anticipations of a future existence. For what is the exultation accompanying a good conscience but a fearless confidence in futurity, or, in other words, a conviction that we have recommended ourselves to the favor of the Righteous Governor of the universe. On the other hand, where the hope and belief of immortality are eradicated from the mind by habits of dissipation or of profligacy, and where sensual enjoyments are regarded as the sole constituents of happiness, a mean and cowardly love of life seldom fails to prevail. The prayer ascribed to Mæcenas is the genuine wish of such an Epicurean.

"Debilem facito manu,
Debilem pede, coxâ;
Tuber adstrue gibberum,
Lubricos quate dentes;
Vita dum superest, bene est.

Hanc mihi, vel acutâ
Si sedeam cruce, sustine." *

Perhaps, however, even in this wretched attachment to life, which has been frequently discovered by profligates under the greatest pressure of bodily sufferings, and when their minds seem to have been completely relieved by habits of scepticism from all prospect of future punishment, we may trace the secret workings of that instinctive horror at annihilation which is probably inseparable from the human constitution.

As the love of life is a distinct principle from the desire of immortality, so those occasional longings for death which good men may feel, when tired and satiated with earthly enjoyments, or when those tender ties are broken which united their hearts to this world, are carefully to be distinguished from a wish for annihilation. The truth is, that it is in such situations that the desire and hope of a future and a better existence are most strongly felt: and that this desire and hope, although they contribute powerfully to reconcile us to our lot, and afford us the strongest motives to remain without murmuring in the station which is assigned us, are yet in a great degree the causes of the disrelish we occasionally feel for life and its pursuits, and of the satisfaction with which we look forward to the grave. I do not deny that a wish for annihilation may have been felt by some men whose prospects of futurity were alarming, and perhaps by others of the worthiest dispositions when under the influence of a gloomy imagination. There is, too, a certain state of lassitude, inactivity, and apathy, which probably most men have experienced, which renders us not only averse to every exertion, but disposes us to wish for rest rather than enjoyment. In this diseased state of the mind it is impossible that the prospect of annihilation might give little disquiet, and might even be more agreeable than that of the ac-

* Seneca, Ep. 101.

"Mécenas fut un galant homme ;
Il a dit quelque part : Qu'on me rende impotent,
Cul-de-jatte, goutteux, manchot ; pourvuqu'en somme,
Je vive ; c'est assez, je suis plus que content."
La Fontaine, Fab.

tive scenes on which we may afterwards enter.* But the general fact unquestionably is, that an ardent desire of immortality is natural to every mind whose prospects are not darkened by remorse, or by a constitutional melancholy, and which is capable of exerting all its various faculties in full vigor. It deserves, too, to be remarked, that this desire is felt most strongly by the best and wisest of men, by those who have devoted their lives to the pursuit of knowledge and to the practice of virtue; and that they who give the readiest reception to the cavils of sceptics, and who can most easily reconcile themselves to the thoughts of annihilation, are men who are devoted to sensual pursuits, or who are intoxicated with the vanity of earthly distinctions. This is not owing merely to anticipations of reward and of punishment, but to the ideas of *happiness* which these two classes of men have formed. The one places it in intellectual and moral pleasures, which we know may be enjoyed to the last moment of life, and which we can conceive to be enjoyed in much higher perfection, when the soul is separated from the body. The other places it in animal gratifications, which are peculiar to a certain period of life, for which we lose our relish as we advance in years, and which in all probability will be confined to this first and lowest stage of our existence.

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* Such seems to have been the state of Gray's mind when he wrote his ode to his friend Mr. West, "Barbaras ædes aditure mecum," &c. In this ode the following stanzas occur:

"O ego felix, vice si (nec unquam
Surgerem rursus) simili cadentem
Parca me lenis sineret quieto
Fallere Letho!

"Multâ flagranti radiisque cincto
Integris ah! quam nihil inviderem,
Cum Dei ardentes medius quadrigas
Sentit Olympus?

In the Appendix to a work entitled Memoirs of Dr. Joseph Priestley, written by himself, with a continuation by his son Joseph Priestley, these stanzas are quoted as a proof that Gray did *not* look forward with anxious hope to a future state.—See Appendix, No ii. p. 318. The authors of this appendix, we are given to understand in the title page, were Thomas Cooper, President Judge of the fourth district of Pennsylvania, and the Rev. William Christie. In reply to this remark I have only to refer the reader to the Second Volume of Gray's Works by Mason, p. 140.—(Letter xxxi. from Mr. Gray to Mr. Stonehewer.)

To this cause it is probably owing that in most cases the desire and *hope* of future existence increase in our declining years, to the support of which they are then more peculiarly necessary. Plato alludes to this fact in that fine and pathetic phrase of *ἐλπὶς γηροτρόφος*, which he quotes from Pindar; a phrase which conveys so much in two words, that I shall not run the risk of weakening it by attempting to illustrate it by any comment.*

Now, what inference are we to draw from this natural desire and expectation? That they are subservient while we are here to the best of purposes, by increasing our happiness and animating our virtue, cannot be disputed. Perhaps it may be supposed that this was the *very* purpose, and the *only* purpose which they were intended to answer; that we are encouraged by nature to indulge them, merely to render us happier in this world, and better members of society: But that we ought not to conclude from this that they will ever be gratified. But is not this supposition founded on a sceptical weakness, similar to what some men have indulged with respect to the immutability of truth, and the competency of the human faculties to discover it? If such suggestions are listened to, there is an end of all reasoning and all belief. That what is clearly demonstrated to our faculties is eternally and immutably true, the constitution of our nature forces us to believe; and when we reflect on the attributes of the Deity we feel this conviction if possible strengthened. In like manner, whatever desires are evidently implanted in our minds by nature, and are en-

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* Plato de Rep. I. p. 330, E. 331, A. *τῷ μηδὲν ἑαυτῷ (ἄδικον* addit Stobæus, qui h. l. exscripsit, p. 756.) *ξυνειδότι ἡδεῖα ἐλπὶς αὐὶ πάρεστι, καὶ ἀγαθὴ γηροτρόφος, ὡς καὶ Πίνδαρος λέγει. Χαρίεντως γάρ που τοῦτ' ἐκεῖνος εἴρηκεν, ὅτι ὃς ἂν δικαίως καὶ ὁσίως τὸν βίον διαγάγῃ,*

Γλυκεῖά οἱ καρδίαν ἀστάλλωσα γηροτρόφος συναορεῖ ἐλπὶς, ἃ μάλιστα θνατῶν πολύστροφον γνώμαν κυβερνᾷ.

Quicunque juste sancteque vitam exegerit, dulcis eum cor nutriens, senectutem fovens, comitatur spes, quæ maxime mortalium volubilem animum gubernat.—Versus restituit Hermann:

γλυκεῖά οἱ καρδίαν ἀντιαλλοῖσα γη—
ροτρόφος ξυναορεῖ
ἐλπὶς, ἃ μάλιστα θνατῶν
πολύστροφον γνώμαν κυβερνᾷ.

Pindari Carmina et Fragmenta cum adnotationibus iterum curavit Chr. Gottl. Heyne. vol. iii. pp. 80, 81. Lipsiæ, 1817.

couraged by the noblest and worthiest principles of our constitution, we may reasonably conclude, will in due time be gratified under the government of a Being infinite both in power and goodness. At least it must be allowed, that, if other considerations appear favorable to our future expectations, the natural desires of the human mind ought to be allowed some force in strengthening the presumption.

(2.) Let us reflect, in the second place, on the natural sentiment of the mind when under the influence of remorse. A murder (we shall suppose) has been perpetrated, from motives of fraud or revenge, without any human witness, and without any circumstance that could lead to a detection. No punishment is to be apprehended from any earthly tribunal. Is this sufficient to quiet the apprehensions of the murderer? Experience shows us the reverse, and furnishes numberless instances in which the recollection of such a crime, though committed with every circumstance of privacy, has been sufficient to poison all the enjoyments which luxury could offer, and even to render life itself insupportable. In vain the murderer seeks for a refuge from the persecutions of conscience by mingling in the busy scenes of life. He has lost the intrepidity of innocence, and trembles to look even his friends in the face, lest his guilt should appear through all the disguises of his countenance. From society he flies to solitude, which affords a good man a retreat from the storms of fortune; and where the soul, long harassed with cares, and sick of the restraints which the world imposes, indulges the natural current of its thoughts and feelings, and gradually regains its strength and its serenity. But the pleasures of solitude are known to the virtuous alone. To the guilty it is full of terrors. Every walk is haunted with spectres, and the tranquillity and peace he sees around him only render his guilt and his danger the more striking to himself and the more alarming. Even the reflection that his crimes have passed unpunished on earth serves at times to aggravate his horrors. The blood he has spilt seems on that very account to call the louder to Heaven for vengeance; and he conceives his punishment in a future state to be the

more certain and the more unavoidable, that he has made no atonement while here to the society he has injured. Under the influence of such apprehensions a murderer has been frequently known, many years after the perpetration of the crime, to feel his existence so intolerable a burden that he has voluntarily revealed his own guilt and delivered himself up to an ignominious death. The vulgar generally believe that Providence sometimes interferes by a miracle to bring secret murderers to light; but in this, as in other instances, Providence acts agreeably to general laws, and has provided a restraint on this most dreadful of all crimes by that infatuation which remorse produces, and which seldom fails, sooner or later, to lead to a detection. Facts of this sort are surely strong indications of the moral government of God, and afford strong presumptions of a future retribution.

(3.) The observations which have hitherto been made relate entirely to those anticipations of futurity which nature forces occasionally on the minds of all men, even of those who are the least disposed to serious reflection. Let us now consider the presumptions which arise from a more extensive and philosophical survey of our faculties and of our situation in the world.

When we examine the instincts and the external condition of the lower animals, we find them to be exactly accommodated to those desires and wants which nature has given them. What were the ultimate purposes of their creation it is impossible for us to ascertain. Some of them seem to be placed in this world chiefly for the use of man, so wonderfully are their instincts adapted to his purposes; others, perhaps, were intended for no further end than to taste to a certain degree of the bounty of their Maker, and (as Goldsmith expresses it) "to animate the solitudes of nature." But, with respect to all of them, we may remark, an exact accommodation of their condition to their desires and to their capacities of enjoyment. These desires and enjoyments seem to be entirely of the *sensual* kind, excepting, perhaps, when an animal is under the influence of the conjugal or the parental affections, or in the case of those who delight in the soci-

ety of their own species. But whatever desires, or whatever capacities of enjoyment any animal is possessed of, the object fitted to gratify it is supplied by nature, and the animal is guided by an unerring impulse to the employment of those means by which the object is to be attained. The enjoyments may be low in comparison to ours, but they are suited to the creatures for whom they are destined, and they are not degraded in their estimation by any mortifying comparisons with the pleasures which belong to superior orders of beings. Indeed, they do not seem to have the least curiosity about the nature of any of the objects which surround them. As the use of reason for the gratification of their wants is superseded by their instincts, the powers of observation and reflection have been kindly withheld from them; and, as nature has in a great measure taken upon herself the care of their subsistence and accommodation, and employs them as blind instruments for the accomplishment of her purposes, so she seems to have relieved them of any anxiety for the future by limiting their views to the present moment.

How different is all this from the condition of man! He is left in many respects to the guidance of his own understanding, and is incapable of accommodating his conduct to the established course of nature, till he has made himself acquainted with it by experience and observation. To this observation of nature he is prompted not only by his necessities, but by the principle of *curiosity*, which leads him to prosecute his researches even when his situation is easy and comfortable; and which therefore does not appear, like the instincts of the brutes, to be subservient merely to the accommodation of his present existence. It may be said, perhaps, that even when our curiosity engages us in inquiries which are merely speculative, we are not entitled to conclude that these inquiries will never be attended with any practical utility; that many discoveries highly important to mankind have been made by men who had no views of their application at the time, and who perhaps lived many ages before these views occurred; and that therefore an important use of the principle of curiosity may be

traced without extending our views beyond the present world. The objection, I acknowledge, is so far just; but still it seems to me that this principle has a manifest reference to higher purposes. If man was intended only to be an inhabitant of this globe, and if the principle of curiosity was bestowed on him only in subserviency to his accommodation here, whence is it that he is in general led to inquire more anxiously about distant and singular phenomena than about those which, from their nearness or frequency, we should expect to be the most interesting? Whence is it that his curiosity extends beyond the surface of this globe, or at least beyond those astronomical facts which may admit of a practical application? Whence is it that he delights in tracing the orbit and computing the motions of a planet invisible to the naked eye, or in predicting the return of a comet many ages after he shall be laid in the dust? But perhaps little could be inferred from our curiosity on these subjects, if we were not so wonderfully supplied with the means of gratifying it. Such, however, are the powers of the human mind, that while the science of medicine remains involved in uncertainty and error; while the structure of the human body is still imperfectly known; while mechanics are not yet agreed about the best form of the plough,—we are able to contemplate the provisions which nature has made for supplying light to the superior and more distant planets; we are able to measure the velocity of light itself; and, without passing the boundaries of the visible universe, can transport ourselves in imagination to regions where the earth and all the planetary spaces vanish from the eye. Even, however, when we are arrived at this limit, we feel that the distance we have passed is but a point in comparison of that infinite space which forces itself on the mind with an irresistible conviction of its necessary existence.

With respect to our own globe, how eager is our curiosity to know the transactions of those generations which have occupied it before us! And after exhausting all the treasures of remote antiquity, how do we complain of the shortness of that period which limits the province of history! Our views, too, are often turned forwards to

the dark regions of futurity, where we see *time*, like *space*, stretching to infinity, and we cannot help inquiring what events are likely to happen in succeeding ages. Shall one generation of men follow another in endless succession, and each return to its original nothing? Or is this world only a state of preparation for higher scenes, where our intellectual and moral powers may continually advance nearer and nearer to perfection?

I have hitherto taken no notice of that curiosity we feel concerning the great Author of all the wonders we see around us. Few will dispute that it is natural and reasonable in man to inquire concerning his own origin and that of the various tribes of animals he sees continually rising into existence; concerning that power which put in motion the different parts of the material universe, and that wisdom which is the source of its order and beauty. Our inquiries on these subjects are essentially different, both in their nature and object, from all the others in which we can employ our faculties; and our disposition to engage in them affords a presumption in favor of a future state perfectly distinct from those that arise from our restless and insatiable curiosity about the objects of science; and a presumption, we may add, not liable to the same objections which might possibly be urged against some of the foregoing reasonings. In our astronomical and physical researches, for example, our object is to ascertain the laws of nature; or, in other words, to discover and to classify facts; and consequently, our inquiries, though they lead us into a more extensive field, are precisely the same in kind with those which lay the foundation of the practical arts, and of our conduct in the common affairs of life. It might perhaps therefore be imagined that our curiosity concerning the distant parts of the universe, and the discoveries to which it has led, do not justify the conclusions I formerly deduced from them, as these discoveries are only to be regarded as the accidental and unavoidable result of principles which were implanted in our minds for very different purposes: That although the knowledge of many astronomical facts may not be subservient to our

accommodation here, and although our faculties were not bestowed on us in order that we might be qualified for discovering them, yet that the same measure of curiosity and of genius which was necessary for the purposes of life could not fail to bring also to light a variety of truths which do not admit of a practical application. But what shall we say of our curiosity concerning the Author of Nature, and the satisfaction we derive in contemplating the marks of power, wisdom, and goodness which are impressed on his works? To what purpose are we rendered capable of elevating our thoughts to him, if we are never to enjoy a clearer view of his nature and attributes, and of the manner in which he governs the material and the moral world? All that philosophy discovers to us with respect to the events which happen in either, and all that is useful for the purposes of human life to know, amounts only to this, that particular events are constantly conjoined together, so that when we see the one we may expect the other; but although we can discover no more, curiosity is not satisfied. Our constitution determines us to believe that every event requires an efficient cause, or implies the operation of power. And it is this principle of our nature which suggests the belief of a Deity. But how he operates, whether mediately or immediately, and how the connexion between mind and matter is carried on, are questions which, although they must excite the curiosity of every man capable of reflection, we may venture to say will never be resolved by human genius. Wherever we direct our inquiries, whether to the anatomy and physiology of animals, to the growth of vegetables, to the chemical attractions and repulsions, or to the motions of the heavenly bodies, we perpetually perceive the effects of powers which cannot belong to mere matter. To a certain length we are able to proceed; but in every research we meet with an impassable line—a line which is marked with sufficient distinctness, and which no man now thinks of passing who has just views of the nature and object of philosophy. It was indeed by pointing it out that Bacon did so much service to science. But although the nature of these

powers, and the mode of their operations, are not the objects of our knowledge at present, we are certain of their existence, and of their acting in subserviency to wise design. So much it was necessary for man to know, to lay a foundation for natural religion, and we can conceive no other purpose to which this knowledge is subservient. It was plainly intended, then, that man should have the idea of overruling power and wisdom: but to what end this idea, if we are not to exist hereafter? And why is our curiosity so strong with respect to things beyond the limit of human inquiry, but to lead our thoughts forward to futurity? If it has not this effect on the mind, the contemplation of the infinite perfections of the Deity, and even a view of the magnificence of the material universe, could only serve to damp the ardor of human pursuits, and make the business of life appear unworthy of our regard. When we return from our excursions through the immensity of space and time to a view of ourselves and of the globe we inhabit, what a short span does human life appear, and how contemptible this boasted theatre of human ambition! "Hoc est punctum quod inter tot gentes ferro et igni dividitur:—cum te in illa vere magna sustuleris, quoties videbis exercitus sub rectis ire vexillis, libebit dicere: It nigrum campis agmen; formicarum iste discursus est in angusto laborantium." *

"O pudor! O stolidi præceps vesania voti!
Quantula pars rerum est, in quâ se gloria jactat,
Ira fremit, metus exanimat, dolor urit, egestas
Cogit opes; ferro, insidiis, flammâ atque veneno
Cernitur, et trepido fervent humana tumultu." †

Such reflections can scarcely fail to force themselves on every mind which contrasts the field of its present exertions with those enlarged prospects of the universe which philosophy opens; and they are certainly reflections which neither contribute to make us happier in ourselves, nor more useful citizens. On the contrary, their tendency in both respects is so manifestly unfavorable, that it may be safely affirmed, that

* Seneca. † Buchan. de Sphærâ, Lib. i l. 678.

if man had no intimations of a future existence, it would have been better for him never to have extended his views beyond this globe and the period of human life, instead of embracing, as at present, a stretch of duration and of space which throws a ridicule on the whole history of human affairs.

But if, on the other hand, we vary the supposition, and are led by a view of the magnificence of nature and the Divine perfections to look forward to a better world, the scene in which we are placed at present will be dignified in our estimation from the important purposes to which it is subservient; and while we pity the folly of those who consider earthly enjoyments as the ultimate objects of their pursuit, we will feel ourselves called on by the most powerful motives to a strenuous discharge of all our various duties.

These observations sufficiently show, that, if man was created for this life alone, he possesses faculties above his condition; and that, if he were to act upon the supposition of his annihilation at death, the extensive views he is able to form of the universe would render him more unfit to perform his part as a member of society than if his intellectual attainments had been more moderate and confined. But if our *faculties* are above our condition, our *curiosity* is still greater than our faculties can satisfy. And here, if I am not mistaken, we may perceive an additional intimation of our future destiny.

It is justly observed by Mr. Maclaurin, in his View of Newton's Discoveries, as a very remarkable circumstance in our present condition—"That the inhabitants of this earth are entirely cut off from all communication with the other great bodies of the universe, and that it is highly probable that similar obstacles prevent the possibility of a communication betwixt the other planets and betwixt the different systems. We are able by telescopes to discover very plainly mountains, precipices, and cavities in the moon; but who tread those precipices, or what purpose those great cavites serve, we know not; and we are at a loss to conceive how this planet, without any atmosphere, vapors, or seas, (as is now

the common opinion of astronomers) can serve for like purposes as our earth. We observe sudden and surprising revolutions on the surface of the great planet Jupiter which would be fatal to the inhabitants of the earth. We observe in them all enough to raise our curiosity, but not to satisfy it. From hence, as well as from the state of the moral world, and many other considerations, we are induced to believe that our present state would be very imperfect without a subsequent one, wherein our views of nature and of its great Author may be more clear and satisfactory. It does not appear suitable to the wisdom that shines throughout all nature to suppose that we should see so far, and have our curiosity so much raised concerning the works of God, only to be disappointed at the end. As man is undoubtedly the chief being upon this globe, and this globe may be no less considerable in the most valuable respects than any other in the solar system, and this system for ought we know not inferior to any in the universal system, so, if we should suppose man to perish without ever arriving at a more complete knowledge of nature than the very imperfect one he attains in his present state, by analogy or parity of reason, we might conclude, that the like desires would be frustrated in the inhabitants of all the other planets and systems, and that the beautiful scheme of nature would never be unfolded, but in an exceedingly imperfect manner to any of them. This, therefore, naturally leads us to consider our present state as only the dawn or beginning of our existence, and as a state of preparation or probation for further advancement; which appears to have been the opinion of the most judicious philosophers of old. And whoever attentively considers the constitution of human nature, particularly the desires and passions of men, which appear greatly superior to their present objects, will easily be persuaded that man was designed for higher views than of this life. These the Author of Nature may have in reserve to be opened up to us at proper periods of time, and after due preparation. Surely it is in his power to grant us a far greater improvement of the faculties we already possess, or even to endow us with new faculties,

of which at this time we have no idea, for penetrating further into the scheme of nature, and approaching nearer unto himself, the First and Supreme Cause. We know not how far it was proper or necessary that we should not be let into knowledge at once, but should advance gradually; that by comparing new objects or new discoveries with what was known to us before, our improvement might be more complete and regular; or how far it might be necessary or advantageous that intelligent beings should pass through a kind of infancy of knowledge; for new knowledge does not consist so much in our having access to a new object as in comparing it with others already known, observing its relations to them, or discerning what it has in common with them, and wherein their disparity consists. Thus our knowledge is vastly greater than the sum of what all its objects separately could afford; and when a new object comes within our reach, the addition to our knowledge is the greater the more we already know, so that it increases not as the new objects increase, but in a much higher proportion." *

Having said so much with respect to our *intellectual powers*, and the disproportion which they bear to the scene of their present exertions, I proceed to consider another presumption in favor of a future state, suggested by our means of *enjoyment*, contrasted with the conceptions of happiness and of perfection which we are able to form.

In appealing to this contrast, I do not mean to deny that there is a rich variety of genuine pleasures placed within our reach even at present, and that the sum of happiness in human life far exceeds the sum of misery. But still the happiness which falls to the lot even of the most fortunate bears no proportion to what we can conceive, or to that of which we feel our natures to be capable. The pleasures of a good conscience are indeed satisfactory and sublime; but how many are the imperfections even of the most virtuous! How much of their life is spent before they attain to an uniform and settled

* Maclaurin's Account of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophical Discoveries, B. vi. chap. 9.

tranquillity, by correcting the defects of their constitutional or acquired tempers, and by subduing the violence of their useful passions! How often is their serenity overset by an hereditary melancholy, or by those bodily diseases which disturb the imagination! Nor is it only *our own* imperfections which affect our tranquillity. How often is it disturbed by those of our friends! How often do we see a trifling collision of passions or of interests interrupt the harmony of men who would willingly sacrifice their lives for each other; or a groundless suspicion and misapprehension occasion a temporary coldness between those who, if they could read each other's hearts, would see every thought pure, honorable, and sincere! While we are mortified with these reflections, can we avoid cherishing the hope, that the time will come when our own characters shall approach nearer to that ideal perfection to which nature teaches us to aspire; when the sunshine of the soul shall be no longer liable to be overcast by the gloom of imagination or the storms of the passions; and when in the society of those whom we loved on earth, freed with us from the weaknesses of mortality, we shall enjoy the intercourse of minds unobscured by earthly prejudices, and indulge the kind affections of the heart, unalloyed by the possibility of change or of separation.

Upon this disproportion between our conceptions of happiness and the possible attainments of human nature, is founded (according to the ingenious remark of Lord Bacon) the delight we derive from the fictions of poetical imagination. And this delight, which is one of the purest and most exquisite we are capable of enjoying, is considered by the same profound and original writer as furnishing a strong proof that the principles of our constitution have a reference to higher scenes than those with which our senses are conversant at present.*

* "Cum enim mundus sensibilis sit animâ rationali dignitate inferior, videtur poësis hæc humanæ naturæ largiri, quæ historia denegat; atque animo umbris rerum utcunque satisfacere, cum solida haberi non possunt. Si quis enim rem acutius introspiciat, firmum ex poësi sumitur argumentum, magnitudinem rerum magis illustrem, ordinem magis perfectum, et varietatem magis pulchram, animæ humanæ complacere quàm in naturâ ipsâ, post lapsum, reperire ullo modo possit. Quapropter cum res gestæ et eventus, qui veræ historiæ subjiciuntur, non sint ejus

To the truth of the fact on which this argument of Bacon's proceeds, most men, I believe, will be ready to bear witness from their own experience, that the happiness of human life falls far short of those conceptions which the mind has a capacity and a disposition to form. But abstracting entirely from this consideration, and supposing all our dreams of happiness to be realized, could we fail at times to reflect on the precarious tenure by which we hold all our comforts? That a moment may dissolve our tenderest connexions, and leave us only the remembrance of happiness which is never to return? Or, if we should be so fortunate as to escape from those severer trials, that the inevitable hour is approaching when we must take a last farewell of all that is dear to us. These pangs, arising from the dissolution of the social connexions, are peculiar to man. The other animals, as I already hinted, seem to enjoy in some degree the pleasures of conjugal and parental affection; but their connexions with each other are only temporary, and are plainly subservient to no other purpose than the continuation of their kind; a circumstance (by the way) which, added to some considerations formerly mentioned, affords a very striking instance of the benevolent care our Maker has taken to save his sensitive creatures from unnecessary sufferings.* They have

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amplitudinis, in quâ anima humana sibi satisfaciat, præsto est poësis, quæ facta magis heroica confingat: Cum historia vera successus rerum, minime pro meritis virtutum et scelerum, narret; corrigit eam poësis, et exitus et fortunas secundum merita et ex lege Nemeseos exhibit. Cum historia vera, obviâ rerum satietate et similitudine, animæ humanæ fastidio sit, reficit eam poësis, inexpectata et varia et vicissitudinum plena canens. Adeo ut poësis ista, non solum ad delectationem, sed etiam ad animi magnitudinem et ad mores conferat."—*De Aug. Scient.* Lib. ii. Cap. 13.

For a translation of this passage see *Tattler*, No. 108.

* The following observations have a sufficient connexion with the foregoing argument to justify their insertion here as a note.

"The spot of the *medulla spinalis*, where its two ascending main nerves that form the grea tbrain cross one another, so that the left fasciculus of the nerves proceeds to the right, and the right fasciculus to the left hemisphere, this spot being injured, there is at once an end of life, as is proved by the following facts.

"Butchers and huntsmen know by experience that the least injury offered to this spot will be instantly fatal. The butcher will plunge his knife accordingly into the neck of the ox at that spot, and so at once cuts through the contexture of the nerves. The consequence is, that the animal falls down, and after a few convulsions ceases to live. The huntsmen proceed on the same principle when they cut through the neck of the game.

"2. *Those animals that kill others will always seize them by the neck, and bite through that part.* In this manner the hound will kill the hare, and the bird of

no anticipation of the future, and of consequence no anxiety about the termination of their existence; and they are freed almost entirely from the pangs which attend the dissolution of the conjugal and parental connexions. As the case in all these respects is different with man, we may reasonably presume that these deductions from his happiness are intended to answer important purposes.*

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prey its quarry. The pole cat worries its prey at a single spring; and Dr. Gall, that he might be thoroughly acquainted with the process, locked up a pole cat for some time, during which he fed it only upon bones till its teeth were blunted. Whilst the pole cat's teeth remained blunt it was not able to kill the rabbits that were put into its kennel with the same despatch as formerly; but when they had again grown sharp, Gall observed, that, on the very first leap it made on the rabbit, it cut the little animal's neck on that very spot with a sharp fang, and instantaneous death ensued. He observed the same thing at a hawking party of the Emperor Joseph the Second. As soon as the hawk had reached the hare it would immediately cut through that part of her neck with its bill."—*Gall's System of the Functions of the Brain, extracted from Charles Augustus Blode's Account of Gall's Lectures at Dresden.* Translated from the German to serve as an Explanatory Companion to Gall's Plaster Sculls.—See pp. 67, 68.

* For the length of the following note I have no apology to offer; it is enough to say that it is from the eloquent pen of D'Alembert.

"M. de Sacy mourut le 26 Octobre 1727, agé de soixante treize ans, chargé de travaux et de vertus, laissant à ses amis le plus cher souvenir, aux gens de lettres le plus digne modèle, aux gens de bien les plus justes regrets. Madame de Lambert, plus âgée que lui de sept ans, et dont l'amitié fidèle et pure avoit fait la douceur de sa vie, lui survécut pour conserver et honorer sa mémoire. Digne et triste objet de ses pleurs, il n'en eut point de repandre sur elle. Ainsi la nature, qui avoit tant fait pour le bonheur de M. de Sacy, y mit le comple par une vieillesse heureuse et paisible, exempte de ce sentiment douloureux que laisse au fond du cœur une perte éternelle et irréparable; sentiment dont l'impression est d'autant plus profonde, que l'âme trouve une espèce d'attrait à s'y liver, et de douceur à en goûter l'amertume; sentiment que sa tristesse même rend en quelque manière désirable, puisqu'il nous fait regarder la mort comme un bienfait de la nature, non parce qu'elle met fin à des larmes qui nous sont chères, mais parce que ce malheur de l'humanité, si c'est un malheur de cesser de souffrir, nous est du moins commun avec ceux que nous avons tendrement aimés, et nous laisse l'espoir consolant de les suivre bientôt dans cet asile éternel et paisible où leur ombre nous a précédés, et où leur voix nous appelle. Madame de Lambert, qui survécut encore six années à M. de Sacy, entretint et nourrit toujours ce sentiment cher à son cœur. Elle y joignit un espoir plus consolant encore, celui que la divinité bienfaisante donne aux âmes vertueuses, de se réunir un jour pour n'avoir plus à pleurer leur séparation; espoir en effet si propre à soulager les maux des cœurs sensibles; espoir dont la malheureuse humanité avoit un besoin si pressant, qu'elle a couru, pour ainsi dire, au-devant de lui, avant que la Bonté Suprême et Eternelle voulut bien le lui présenter elle-même. Un sentiment profond et plein de vie, privé d'un objet chéri qu'il ne retrouveroit plus, et ne pouvant supporter l'idée accablante d'être anéanti pour jamais, a inspiré, intéressé, éclairé la raison, pour lui faire embrasser avec transport cette attente précieuse d'une existence immortelle, dont le premier désir n'a pas dû naître dans une tête froide et philosophe, mais dans un cœur qui avoit aimé."

The foregoing passage seems to have touched the heart of even the Baron de Grimm. His words are these, speaking of the éloges of D'Alembert in general: "Il y a de l' interêt et de la douceur dans les éloges de Massillon, de l'Archevêque de Cambrai et de Flechier, mais il n'y en a aucun où l'on remarque une sensibilité plus vrai et plus aimable que dans celui de M. de Sacy. L'auteur y peint l'amitié comme un homme qui en a senti tout le charme et tout la puissance. *Quand M. D'Alembert fit cet éloge, il venoit de perdre Mademoisolle de Lespinasse;* on peut

(4.) There is another part of our constitution which seems to have a manifest reference to a future state. Our moral habits continue improving to the last hour of life, and are frequently strengthened and confirmed in a very remarkable degree amidst those painful and lingering struggles which precede our dissolution. Now, all those powers of our nature, which appear to be accommodated to our present state alone, begin after a certain period to decline. This is the case with all the active powers of the body, and all the organs of perception. As we find then our moral habits are capable of improvement to the last, are we not entitled to conclude that they are intended, not merely for discharging our duties in society, but to qualify us for another existence? Indeed, were the case otherwise, it would be difficult to give any plausible account of the sufferings which commonly put a period to the life of man, and which exceed so remarkably those which fall to the share of any other species of animals.

What I have said with respect to moral habits is applicable also to our intellectual desires. In the case of those who have devoted themselves to study, the ardor of curiosity frequently continues to the last unabated, and even increasing. And here, too, a boundless field of improvement opens to our view, both in our faculties themselves, to the progressive enlargement of which it is impossible for imagination to fix any limits; and in the objects of our knowledge, which are as infinite as the works of the Creator.

(5.) Among the various considerations, however, which intimate a relation between this world and another state of being, there is none which has had more weight in all ages with serious and thinking men of every description (whether their minds have been enlightened by philosophy or not) than the discordance between our moral judgments and feelings, and the course of human affairs.

That the course of human affairs is *on the whole* agreea-

croire que ce tableau touchant fut tracé sur la tombe de son amie."—*Mémoires de Grimm*, Tome v. p. 150. Londres chez Colburn, 1814.—See Note (F.) at the end.

ble to our ideas of good and ill desert is sufficiently obvious, not only from that self-approbation which is the inseparable attendant of virtue, but from the tendency which virtue has to procure us the favor of the world. Whoever reflects with attention upon this will perceive manifest indications that the Being who presides over the universe is interested on the side of good men; and that whatever occasional evils may befall them, their happiness is the leading object of those *general laws* by which his government is conducted.

The existence, at the same time, of these occasional evils cannot be disputed; nor is it possible to deny, that in consequence of them the moral government of God appears to us at present not altogether perfect. It is on the supposition of a future state alone that the difficulty can be removed; and without it many of the most striking phenomena of human life must remain for ever inexplicable. In some parts of the material universe we are able to trace the most complete and the most systematical order and beauty; and we invariably find that, in proportion as our knowledge extends, our views of its government become more pleasing and more satisfactory. The condition of the brutes, too, appears to us to be wonderfully accommodated to their various natures. Why then should we suppose that it is with respect to man alone that the scheme of Providence is to be left incomplete, or reject a doctrine supported by so striking a concurrence of separate and independent arguments, which furnish a key to all the apparent disorders of the moral world?

These presumptions in favor of this most important of all truths, drawn from the course of events in human life, are stated with great force in one of the most eloquent passages of Mr. Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments, to which, on account of its length, I must beg leave to refer the reader.*

I am aware of an objection that may be stated to this reasoning, and which has in fact been urged with considerable ingenuity and plausibility by Mr. Hume; that

* See Vol. I. p. 41.

the only safe principle on which we can pretend to judge of those parts of the universe which have not fallen under our examination, is by concluding them to be analogous to what we have observed.

"Of God above or man below,
What can we reason but from what we know?"

Now, the only fact we know with respect to the moral government of God is, that the distribution of happiness and misery in human life is in a great measure promiscuous. Is it not then a most extraordinary inference from this fact, to conclude that there must be a future state of existence to correct the inequalities of the present scene? Would it not be more reasonable and more agreeable to the received rules of philosophizing to conclude either that the idea of a future state is a mere chimera, or that, if such an idea shall ever be realized, the distribution of happiness and misery will continue to be as promiscuous as we have experienced it to be? The objection, I confess, is not without some plausibility, but it will not bear an accurate examination. For

1. Admitting the distribution of happiness and misery in human life to be altogether promiscuous, this is not the *only fact* from which we are entitled to reason concerning the moral government of God. Our own moral constitution is a part of the scheme of Providence no less than the order of external events; and it has been already shown that this constitution does not accord with the scene in which it is placed, but leads us, not only to form conceptions of a more perfect order, but to hope and expect that these conceptions will some time or other be realized.

2. It is *not* a fact that the distribution of happiness and misery here is altogether indiscriminate. On the contrary it has been shown, that, although the order of events does not correspond completely with our ideas of good and of ill desert, it does so to so great a degree as must convince us that the reward of virtue and the punishment of vice are the leading objects of all those general laws by which the world is governed. The

exceptions which occur to these laws arise from accidental circumstances connected with our present condition; and supposing these circumstances to be removed, *the general laws* continuing exactly as at present, nothing more perhaps would be wanting to realize our hopes with respect to the moral government of the universe.

This observation coincides in part with one of Dr. Butler's concerning the *tendencies* of virtue and of vice, as contrasted with their *actual effects*. Virtue, it is evident, would be much more amply rewarded in this world than it is, and vice much more severely punished, if the characters of individuals were completely known, and if all those who felt themselves interested in the cause of morality had power corresponding to their wishes. It is further evident, that these obstacles to the natural tendencies of virtue and of vice arise from accidental circumstances relative to our present state, whereas the tendencies themselves arise from the nature of things (or, in other words, from the moral constitution of the human mind;) and therefore the moral government of the universe in general is to be judged of, not from what we actually see here, but from what we *would* see, if the tendencies of virtue and of vice were realized by their being placed in a more favorable scene of action.

It is also extremely worthy of our attention, (as the some profound author has further remarked) that virtue has a natural tendency to increase the power of a community or society of men in proportion as it influences the conduct of the members, by rendering the public good the common aim of their actions; by rousing the abilities of each individual to study and to promote the general interest; and by uniting them altogether by the principles of justice and humanity. In this respect virtue has a natural tendency to prevail over vice, in the same manner as reason has a natural tendency to prevail over brute force. As reason, however, may, notwithstanding this tendency, be sometimes overpowered by brute force, so virtue may be sometimes overpowered by vice; but still the natural tendencies both of virtue

and of reason to prevail over their opposites remain indisputable, and wherever they are prevented from being carried into effect, the natural order of things is plainly deranged or inverted.

Among the circumstances which check the natural tendencies of virtue here, it is sufficient to mention the difficulty of knowing completely the characters of others; in consequence of which good men are prevented from forming that intimate union with each other which virtue tends to produce, and an unnatural alliance is often established between men of the most opposite views and principles. We may add to this, the shortness of human life, which seldom allows the characters of individuals to display themselves fully, or their projects of beneficence to be carried into complete execution. Other causes besides these will readily present themselves to every one; but supposing even these to be removed, what a scene would human life become! How complete would be the triumph of virtue over vice, even if the number of the wicked were to continue undiminished!

To illustrate a little more fully this observation concerning the natural tendency of virtue, Dr. Butler supposes a kingdom or society of men perfectly virtuous to continue upon earth for a succession of ages. For his very interesting description of the happy consequences which would result from this supposition were it realized, I must refer the reader to his work.

To those who reflect seriously on the description given by Dr. Butler, (the chief heads of which may be easily imagined by an intelligent reader) and who consider at the same time how extremely probable it is (from what we know of the analogies and of the unity of design displayed in the universe) that our future condition will be not wholly different *in kind* from what we have already experienced,* it will not appear a very extravagant idea to suppose, that in another state good

* The same idea occurs in Milton, who seems to have thought the conjecture not improbable, however different from the common belief of the world.

"What if earth
Be but the shadow of Heaven and things therein,
Each to other like more than on earth is thought?"
Par. Lost, Book v.

men may be united together in such communities as have been now imagined; perhaps united with other beings who have been trained to like habits in other parts of the universe; for (as the same author has well observed) "the immensity of the *material* world forces us to conclude that there must be *some* scheme of Providence vast in proportion to it." Nothing indeed could be conceived more inconsistent with that unity or analogy of design which is every where conspicuous in the works of creation than to suppose, that, while all the different bodies that compose the *material* universe are manifestly related to each other, and form parts of *one* great connected whole, the *moral* events that happen on our globe are quite insulated; and that the rational beings which inhabit it, and for whom we may reasonably presume the globe was made, have no relation whatever to other intelligent and moral natures. The presumption unquestionably is, that there is *one* great *moral* system corresponding to the *material* system; and that the connexions which we are able at present to trace so distinctly among the sensible objects which compose the one, are exhibited to us as so many intimations of some vast scheme afterwards to be disclosed to us, comprehending all the intelligent beings that compose the other.

The remarks of Butler now referred to, afford, in my opinion, a satisfactory answer to the objections which they were brought to refute. If the distribution of happiness and misery in this world were perfectly indiscriminate, then undoubtedly no argument for a future state could be drawn from the general laws which regulate human affairs; or (which comes much to the same purpose) from what Dr. Butler calls the *tendencies* of virtue and of vice; and in that case the evidences of a future retribution would rest on the other considerations already stated. But the tendencies of virtue and of vice are even in this world sufficiently manifest to demonstrate that the general laws by which the universe is governed are favorable to the one and hostile to the other. The distributive justice to which we look for-

-d hereafter is a thing not different in kind but

only in degree from what we experience here. It is only an order of things carried into *effect*, towards which we every where around us see a *tendency*. These tendencies, too, it must be remembered, arise from the nature of things; the obstacles to their effects are merely accidental. If these obstacles were removed virtue and vice would *really* produce the effects which they at present *tend* to produce; or, in other words, the moral government of God would exhibit the same perfection which we trace in all the other operations of creation and Providence.

The result of all that has now been stated concerning the nature of man, considered in its relation to the circumstances in which he is placed, amounts to this,—that in the former there are many appearances to which there is nothing corresponding in the latter; and which we may therefore regard as so many intimations that the ends of our being are placed beyond the reach of our researches at present. "Whoever considers," says Dr. Ferguson, "the anatomy of the fœtus will find in the structure of bones and muscles, in the organs of respiration and digestion, sufficient indications of a design to remove his being into a different state. The observant and intelligent may perhaps find in the mind of man parallel signs of his future destination." This remark, which was first made in his Institutes of Moral Philosophy,* he has since illustrated more fully in his larger work, where he has placed it in so striking a point of view, that I shall borrow his words as the most impressive conclusion to which I can bring this part of my argument.

"If the human fœtus were qualified to reason of his prospects in the womb of his parent, as he afterwards may do in his range on this terrestrial globe, he might no doubt apprehend in the breach of his umbilical chord, and in his separation from the womb, a total extinction of life; for how could he conceive it to continue after his only supply of nourishment from the vital stock of his parent had ceased? He might indeed observe many parts of his organization and frame which should seem to have

* Published for the use of his students.

no relation to his state in the womb. For what purpose, he might say, this duct which leads from the mouth to the intestines? Why these bones that each apart becomes hard and stiff, while they are separated from one another by so many flexures or joints? Why these jaws in particular made to move upon hinges, and these germs of teeth which are pushing to be felt above the surface of the gums? Why the stomach through which nothing is made to pass? And these spungy lungs, so well fitted to drink up the fluids, but into which the blood that passes every where else is scarcely permitted to enter?

"To these queries, which the fœtus was neither qualified to make nor to answer, we are now well apprized the proper answer would be,—the life which you now enjoy is but temporary; and these particulars which now seem to you so preposterous, are a provision which nature has made for a future course of life which you have to run, and in which their use and propriety will appear sufficiently evident.

"Such are the prognostics of a future destination that might be collected from the state of the fœtus; and similar prognostics of a destination still future may be collected from present appearances in the life and condition of man."

I shall only add further on this subject, the confirmation which the foregoing reasonings derive from their coincidence with the universal belief of mankind. Of the reality of this belief (however disfigured by superstition and ignorance) no one can doubt, who is either acquainted with the history of the ancient world, or with the voyages of our modern navigators; and wherever the possibility of an existence after death is admitted, the doctrine of a future state is in so far confirmed by the natural sentiments of mankind, without being at all affected by the accessory articles of belief, which vary in every different instance. "That the souls of men survive the dissolution of the body," says Cicero, "we may consider as a truth sanctioned by the universal belief of all nations."—"In what manner this anticipation of ages yet to come strikes its root so deeply in the prin-

ciples of our frame I pretend not to explain." *—Two passages which at once illustrate Cicero's own opinion concerning the force of the argument from general consent, and establish the *truth of the fact* on which the argument proceeds as far as the history of the world was known in his age.

With respect to those rude tribes which have been visited by our modern travellers and navigators it would be endless to enter into details. It is sufficient to observe in general terms, that the assertion of Cicero concerning those parts of the globe with which he was acquainted may confidently be extended to all which have been since explored. That it may not be possible to find out some exceptions to the universality of the fact, I will not venture positively to affirm,—not that I myself am disposed to think that any such exceptions do exist, but because I am unwilling to afford any ground for cavil, particularly in a case like the present, where I am in no danger of injuring my argument by the concessions I make. It is enough for my purpose to remark, that, if any tribe of men is to be found altogether destitute of religious impressions, it must be a tribe so sunk in the scale of civilization as to have lost at the same time the other characteristical marks of a rational and moral nature. In hazarding this assertion I am supported by the unsuspicious authority of Mr Hume. "Look out," says he, "for a people entirely destitute of religion: If you find them at all, be assured that they are but few degrees removed from brutes."

I shall just add to this observation, that, in reading the accounts given by travellers of the religious opinions of savage tribes, great allowances ought to be made for the mistakes they are liable to in ascertaining the real state of the *fact*, in consequence of their imperfect acquaintance with the languages by which their information is acquired, added to the probable defects of such languages on all subjects in which abstract ideas are involved.

Many of the accounts which have been appealed to on

* "Permanere animos arbitramur consensu nationum omnium.....Nescio quomodo inhæret in mentibus quasi sæculorum quoddam augurium."

the present occasion contain their own refutation. Thus Father le Gobien, in his History of the Marianne Isles, after having affirmed that their inhabitants did not discover the slightest idea of religion, tells us immediately after, that "they practise invocations of the dead, whose sculls they preserve in their houses, and to which they ascribe the power of controlling the elements, of changing the seasons, and of restoring health; that they are persuaded of the immortality of the soul, and acknowledge a paradise and a hell." It is difficult to conceive how such opinions should prevail without some idea of a Deity.

In the voyages of some of our late navigators we meet with facts which (supposing them to be well ascertained) are not easily explicable. Such are those mentioned by Cook and others concerning the religious opinions of the South Sea islanders. "From the rigid severity," says he, speaking of the inhabitants of the Friendly Islands, "with which some of their mourning and religious ceremonies are executed, one would expect to find that they meant thereby to secure felicity to themselves beyond the grave; but their principal object relates to things merely temporal; for they seem to have little conception of future punishment for faults committed in this life."

"The inhabitants of Otaheite," says Hawkesworth,* "believe the immortality of the soul, and that there are two situations after death somewhat analogous to our Heaven and Hell; but they do not suppose that their actions here in the least influence their future state." Dr. Douglas, the learned editor of Cook's last voyage, remarks how conformable to this is the belief of the inhabitants of the Ladrones or Marianne Isles, as described by Le Gobien.—"Ils sont persuadés de l'immortalité de l'âme. Ils reconnoissent même un paradis et un enfer dont ils se forment des idées assez bizarres. Ce n'est point, selon eux, la vertu ni le crime qui conduit dans ces lieux-là; les bonnes ou les mauvaises actions n'y servent de rien."

With respect to these assertions, I believe I might be

* Vol. ii. p. 239.

justified in calling them in question in their full extent for the reasons already mentioned; more particularly as I was assured by one of the most intelligent navigators of the present age,* (who, in the course of three voyages round the globe, had better opportunities than any other individual of studying the genius and character of the South Sea islanders) that after a residence of several months at Otaheite in the last visit he paid to that island, he committed to the flames great part of the papers he had written soon after his arrival, and which he had imagined at the time contained very curious and accurate information, in consequence of the gross mistakes which a more perfect acquaintance with the language discovered to him in his narrative. The same gentleman added, that although the language is extremely easily acquired in so far as is necessary for the ordinary intercourse of a stranger with the natives, the case is widely different where the conversation turns on more general and abstract subjects.

Admitting, however, the fact to be as stated in the foregoing extracts, it is so plainly contrary to the general history of mankind, that I should not hesitate to ascribe it to the influence of artificial habits of thinking, superinduced by political institutions. The natural sentiments of a people must not always be judged of from their established creed, as this is often manufactured by priests and politicians,—an assertion for the proof of which I need only refer to the doctrines taught by the antinomian divines of England during the usurpation of Cromwell. Indeed, these doctrines were exactly similar in substance to those which excite our astonishment so much when we hear of them among the inhabitants of Otaheita or of the Ladrone islands, the object of both being avowedly to separate faith from morality, and to associate our ideas of merit and demerit with the observance or neglect of external rites and ceremonies.† It is against the same prejudice that these noble lines of *Persius* are directed.

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* Captain Bligh.

† It may perhaps be questioned if these doctrines be yet entirely abandoned by *all* the theologians of this island.

"Quin damus id superis, de magnâ quod dare lance
Non possit magni Messalæ lippa propago:
COMPOSITUM JUS, FASQUE ANIMI; SANCTOSQUE RECESSUS
MENTIS, ET INCOCTUM GENEROSO PECTUS HONESTO:
Hæc cedo ut admoveam templis, et farre litabo."

That the *moral* feelings of the South Sea islanders ought not to be rashly inferred from the imperfect accounts of their religion given by Cook, his own testimony is sufficient to show. "The religious system," he observes in one place, "of the inhabitants of Otaheite is extensive, and in many instances singular; but few of the common people have a perfect knowledge of it; that being chiefly confined to the priests, who are pretty numerous." (December 1777.) The traces of a political religion are discernible also in the account which he gives of the North Zealanders.

"This perpetual state of war and destructive method of conducting it operates so strongly in producing habitual circumspection, that one can hardly ever find a North Zealander off his guard either by night or by day. Indeed no other man can have such powerful motives to be vigilant, as the preservation both of body and soul depends on it. For, according to their system of belief, the soul of the man whose flesh is devoured by the enemy is doomed to a perpetual fire, while the soul of the man whose body has been rescued from those who killed him, as well as the souls of all who died a natural death, ascend to the habitation of the gods."—In this creed we see evidently the hand of the political religionist; and accordingly Cook adds to the passage just quoted,—"Whatever the principles of this religion may be, of which we remain very ignorant, its instructions are very strongly inculcated into them from their very infancy." (February 1777.) In its general spirit and tendency it seems to bear a remarkable resemblance to that of the Druids, so nobly expressed by Mason in the last chorus of Caractacus, where, after painting the wretched condition of the cowardly and the servile, *Death* (who is the speaker) contrasts it with the happiness purchased by those who fall bravely in the field.

—"Not such the meed that crowns the sons of liberty,—
No, my Britons! Battle-slain,

Rapture gilds your parting hour;
I, that all despotic reign,
Claim but there a moment's power.
Swiftly the soul of British flame
Animates some kindred frame,
Again to light and life triumphant flies,
Exults again in martial ecstacies,
Again for freedom fights, again for freedom dies."

Upon the whole, without entering into a minute discussion of the facts alleged by particular travellers, we may safely affirm that the doctrine of a future state and of a future retribution is sanctioned by the general voice of mankind, in whatever manner the principles of their nature may be modified by the place they occupy in the scale of civilization. The refinement of their sentiments on the subject varies indeed with the cultivation which their faculties have received; but in no state of society are they altogether deprived of those hopes of futurity which lighten the pressure of their present sufferings. That these hopes originate partly in the infirmities and prejudices of men, affords no presumption whatever against the reality of the objects towards which they are directed; for here, as in many other instances, the tendency of our prejudices coincides with the conclusions of an enlightened reason; and affords to those who enjoy the comprehensive views of the universe which philosophy opens, an additional ground of gratitude to that Providence which, as in the case of the individual, it guards his animal existence by means of implanted instincts in the infancy of human reason, so in the case of society it often anticipates the conclusions of philosophy by prejudices inspired by our weaknesses and necessities. In this instance, however, it is not prejudice alone that leads the unenlightened savage to the truth, but the influence also of those moral considerations already illustrated, some of which are no less obvious and impressive to the rude and ignorant mind, than to those whose understandings have been illuminated, and whose feelings have been refined by science.

Of the two great principles of natural religion, the belief of a Deity and of a future state, it is remarkable

that the latter seems to be still more inseparable from our constitution than the former,—a fact which coincides with a remark already made, that even absolute atheism does not exclude the possibility of our existing hereafter. Dr. Robertson, who admits that "several tribes have been discovered in America which have no idea whatever of a Supreme Being, and no rites of religious worship," asserts, "that the belief of a future existence may be traced from one extremity of America to the other; in some regions more faint and obscure, in others more perfectly developed, but no where unknown. The most uncivilized of its savage tribes do not apprehend death as the extinction of being. All hope for a future and more happy state, where they shall be for ever exempt from the calamities which embitter human life in its present condition."—"The human mind," says the same eloquent and philosophical historian, "even when least improved and invigorated by culture, shrinks from the thoughts of dissolution, and looks forward with hope and expectation to a future existence. This sentiment, resulting from a secret consciousness of its own dignity, from an instinctive longing after immortality, is universal, and may be deemed natural. Upon this are founded the most exalted hopes of man in his highest state of improvement; nor has nature withheld from him this soothing consolation in the most early and rude period of his progress."

I have now stated pretty fully the principal evidences which the light of nature affords in proof of a future state. Of the different considerations I have mentioned, there is perhaps not one which, taken singly, would be sufficient to establish this important truth; but taken in conjunction their united force appears to me far to outweigh all the metaphysical doubts and difficulties which have been started on the other side of the question. They not only all terminate in the same conclusion, but they mutually reflect light on each other; and have all that sort of consistency and connexion among themselves which could hardly be supposed to take place among a series of false propositions. "Truth,"

as Mr. Hume has remarked, "is *one thing*, but errors are numberless, and every man has a different one." When we find, therefore, a variety of conclusions, to which we have been led by separate and independent processes of reasoning, to be all consistent with each other, this furnishes a strong presumption that all these conclusions are true.

The same remark may be extended to the other principles of natural religion. They all hang together in such a manner, that, if any one of them be granted, it facilitates the way for the reception of all the rest. Admit, for example, the *existence* of the Deity,—his wisdom, justice, and goodness (all of which considerations conspire powerfully in strengthening the presumption for a future state) may almost be said to follow as corollaries from the very idea of a God;—and, on the other hand, our instinctive desire of immortality, with all the hopes and fears connected with it; our speculations concerning the nature of the soul; and a great variety of other inquiries, continually lead the thoughts to that invisible Being who is the great source of existence and the Supreme Arbiter of happiness and misery.

It may not be improper to repeat once more in this last stage of our argument, that, although the belief of a God strengthens greatly the presumption for a future state, yet it would not necessarily follow, on the supposition of atheism, that a future state is impossible. The same *chance*, or the same *necessity* which brought us into the world, *may* carry us into another. Nay, a variety of considerations might be alleged to show that this supposition was more *probable* than the contrary one. The principal effect that the atheistic scheme would produce on the future prospects of a man who reasoned consequentially from it, would be to fill his mind with uncertainty and alarm about his future destination, by leading him to consider himself as the victim of blind and unintelligent causes. Dr. Butler was, I believe, the first who made this observation with respect to the possibility of a future state on the supposition of atheism; and it has been repeated by M. Necker in his Treatise on the Importance of Religious Opinions. "How hap-

pens it," says this ingenious and eloquent writer, "that some pretend that atheism frees us from every kind of terror about futurity? I cannot perceive that such a conclusion follows from this fatal system. A God, such as my heart delineates, encourages and moderates all my feelings. I say to myself, He is good and indulgent. He knows our weaknesses, he loves to produce happiness, and I see the advances of death with confidence and hope. But every fear would become reasonable, if I lived under the dominion of an invisible nature whose revolutions and laws are unknown. I seek for some means to escape from its power, but even death cannot afford me a retreat, or space an asylum. A blind nature surrounds me and governs me imperiously. I in vain demand what is to be done with me: It is deaf to my voice. Devoid of thought, will, and feeling, it is governed by an irresistible force, whose action is a mystery never to be unfolded. What a fatal blow to my happiness to abandon all my ideas of infinite wisdom, justice, and goodness: to believe that the universe is without a Father and Governor, and that there is no power in nature that I can invoke as a protector! Were I even to apprehend that my prospects terminated here, I should be less unhappy if it was to a parent and a benefactor that I resigned my being. This last communication with him would mitigate my sufferings. My eyes when closing would perceive his power. I might still hope that God remained with those I loved; and find some comfort in the thought, that my destiny was united with his will, and that the incomprehensible darkness I was going to plunge into is equally a part of his empire."

Nor is it merely with *each other* that the principles of natural religion are connected. They have a relation to all the other principles of moral philosophy; insomuch, that a person who entertains just views of the one never fails to entertain also just views of the other. Indeed, I do not think that I should go too far were I to assert that they have a relation to almost all the truths we know, whether in the moral, the intellectual, or the material worlds. One thing is certain, that, in proportion as our knowledge extends, our doubts and objec-

tions disappear; new light is continually breaking in upon us from every quarter, and more of order and system appears in the universe. It is chiefly from partial and limited views of nature that scepticism arises, not only as these views suggest to us objections which would vanish upon a more enlarged acquaintance with the subject, but as they withdraw the attention from those comprehensive and sublime prospects of the universe which impress the mind with an irresistible conviction of wise and beneficent design. A natural philosopher, for example, who confines his attention to a particular problem in physical astronomy is much less likely to be struck with the marks of Divine contrivance, than if he were to attend to the solar system in general, and to study the mutual relations of its different parts. This is probably one cause of the difference between the character of some late mathematicians on the continent and that of their predecessors, that the latter had exhausted the grandest views of the universe, and left to their successors only the study of it in detail. A philosopher who (like Bacon) extends his inquiries to all the different branches of science, is still less in danger of scepticism than if he were to confine himself to the study of *physics;* and, in general, the more we know, the more we perceive of order and system in the universe, and the more satisfied do we feel ourselves with the condition and the prospects of man.

It is a strong confirmation of these observations that almost all the great discoveries, both in moral and physical science, have been made by men friendly to the principles of religion; and that those writers who have affected to be sceptical on this last subject, have in general been paradoxical and sophistical in all their other scientific inquiries. This not only shows the connexion which subsists between the different truths which are placed within our reach, but proves that it is to a mind well fitted for the discovery and reception of truth in general that the evidences of religion appear the most satisfactory. When an author, for example, who affects to be sceptical about the Divine existence, is also found in the course of his speculations to doubt

of his own, and about the certainty of mathematical science, it must go far to weaken his authority as a guide in philosophy. Of the competency of the human faculties to attain truth on the most abstruse subjects, we have an experimental proof in the unerring certainty with which we are able to predict the phenomena of the heavens many centuries before they are to happen. And why should we doubt the clear conclusions of our reason in those other inquiries, where, from their nature, we have not at present the same opportunity of verifying them by the fact? One thing I may venture to affirm, that, had we not this sensible and palpable confirmation of the certainty of mathematical and astronomical science, it would be difficult to vindicate against the charge of presumption those men who pretend to decide with confidence concerning a part of the universe, apparently so far removed from the examination of our faculties.

Now surely it is no inconsiderable presumption against the reasonableness of a sceptical disposition in religion, that it misleads us also in the other sciences, and, I may add, unfits us for the business of life; whereas just views of religion teach us to think favorably of the human faculties, and both animate and direct us in the search of truth, in whatever inquiries we may happen to engage.

Consider, too, in what state of mind men are chiefly disposed to be sceptical. Is it not when oppressed with low spirits, and when out of humor with themselves and with the world? On the contrary, it is in the most healthful condition of the soul, when external nature smiles around us, when all our faculties are vigorous and active, when we are satisfied with ourselves, and engaged in the service of mankind, that we feel the most sensibly our relation to another state of existence, and, without any long process of reasoning, become as it were *conscious* of the indissoluble and eternal union between happiness and virtue. Perhaps this circumstance by itself would not prove much, but added to those already mentioned it seems to me to have some weight.

The happy influence which the belief of a future state

has on the conduct and the enjoyments of mankind also tends to confirm its credibility. This is so remarkable that it has led some to consider it merely as an invention of *politicians* to preserve the good order of society, and to increase the happiness of human life. But if it be allowed that it *has* this tendency, can it be supposed that the Author of the universe should have left the order and happiness of social life to depend on the belief of a mere chimera, which was in time to vanish before the light of philosophy? Is it not more probable that the enlargement of our knowledge, to which we are so powerfully prompted by the principle of curiosity, will tend to increase, and not to diminish the virtue and the happiness of mankind; and instead of spreading a gloom over nature, and extinguishing the hopes which nature inspires, will gradually unfold to us in the moral world the same order and beauty we admire in the material?

After all that I have urged in proof of a future state, I must again repeat (and the same remark may be extended to the proofs of religion in general) that the evidence which the light of reason affords on the subject is only moral or probable, and by no means of a *demonstrative* nature. But what is the evidence on which we every day act in life? Precisely of the same kind, and often very inferior in degree, to that which results from the foregoing considerations. "It ought," says Dr. Butler, "to be forced upon the reflection of sceptical persons, that such is our nature and condition, that they necessarily require us, in the daily course of life, to act upon evidence much lower than what is commonly called probable; and that there are numberless instances, respecting the common pursuits of life, where a man would be thought in a literal sense distracted, who would not act, and with great application too, not only on an even chance, but on much less, and where the probability was greatly against his succeeding."

It may perhaps be asked why the evidences of a future state were not made more striking and indubitable; why human reason was left so much in the dark on a subject so interesting to our happiness; and why even that revelation which has brought life and immortality to

light, has not afforded us a clearer view of the occupations and enjoyments of futurity. To these questions it would be presumptuous to attempt a direct reply. But surely we may be permitted to observe, that the evidences of a future state may be easily conceived to have been so irresistibly strong, and the prospect of our future destination so clearly presented to our view, that the world would no longer have answered the purpose of a state of probation; nor would the business of life have afforded any object of sufficient magnitude to interest our passions, and call forth our actions.

> "A sense of higher life would only damp
> The school-boy's task, and spoil his playful hours:
> Nor could the child of reason, feeble man,
> With vigor through this infant being drudge,
> Did brighter worlds their unimagined bliss
> Disclosing, dazzle and dissolve his mind." *

This idea is illustrated with his usual taste and judgment, and with somewhat more than his usual originality of thought, by Dr. Blair, in his discourse on our imperfect knowledge of a future state; and it has been placed in a singularly happy point of view by Bernardin de St. Pierre, in his ingenious and eloquent work, entitled *Studies of Nature.*

"I recollect," says M. de St. Pierre, "that, on my return to France in a vessel which had been on a voyage to India, as soon as the sailors had perfectly distinguished the land of their native country, they became in a great measure incapable of attending to the business of the ship. Some looked at it wistfully without the power of minding any other object; others dressed themselves in their best clothes, as if they had been going that moment to disembark; some talked to themselves, and others wept. As we approached, the disorder of their minds increased. As they had been absent several years, there was no end to their admiration of the verdure of the hills, of the foliage of the trees, and even of the rocks which skirted the shore, covered over with sea weed and mosses. The church

* Thomson's Liberty.

spires of the villages where they were born, which they distinguished at a distance up the country, and which they named one after another, filled them with transports of delight. But when the vessel entered the port, and when they saw on the quays their friends, their fathers, their mothers, their wives, and their children stretching out their arms to them with tears of joy, and calling them by their names, it was no longer possible to retain a single man on board. They all sprang ashore, and it became necessary, according to the custom of the port, to employ another set of mariners to bring the vessel to her moorings.

"What then would be the case were we indulged with a sensible discovery of those regions inhabited by those who are most dear to us, and who alone are worthy of our most sublime affections? All the laborious and vain solicitudes of a present life would come to an end. The exit from this world to the other being in every man's power, the gulf would be quickly shot; but nature has involved it in obscurity, and has planted doubt and apprehension to guard the passage."

After the view which has been given of the principles of natural religion, little remains to be added concerning the duties which respect the Deity. To employ our faculties in studying those evidences of power, of wisdom, and of goodness which he has displayed in his works, as it is the foundation in other instances of our sense of religious obligation, so it is in itself a duty incumbent on us as reasonable and moral beings, capable of recognising the existence of an Almighty Cause, and of feeling corresponding sentiments of devotion. By those who entertain just opinions on this subject, the following practical consequences, which comprehend some of the chief effects of religion on the temper and conduct, will be readily admitted as self-evident propositions.

In the *first* place, if the Deity be possessed of infinite moral excellence, we must feel towards him in an infinite degree, all those affections of love, gratitude, and

light, has not afforded us a clearer view of the occupations and enjoyments of futurity. To these questions it would be presumptuous to attempt a direct reply. But surely we may be permitted to observe, that the evidences of a future state may be easily conceived to have been so irresistibly strong, and the prospect of our future destination so clearly presented to our view, that the world would no longer have answered the purpose of a state of probation; nor would the business of life have afforded any object of sufficient magnitude to interest our passions, and call forth our actions.

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In the *first* place, if the Deity be possessed of infinite moral excellence, we must feel towards him in an infinite degree, all those affections of love, gratitude, and

confidence, which are excited by the imperfect worth we observe among our fellow-creatures; for it is by conceiving all that is benevolent and amiable in man raised to the highest perfection that we can alone form some faint notion of the Divine Nature. To cultivate, therefore, an habitual love and reverence of the Supreme Being, may be justly considered as the first great branch of morality; nor is the virtue of that man complete, or even consistent with itself, in whose mind those sentiments of piety are wanting.

Piety seems to be considered by Mr. Smith as founded in some degree on those principles of our nature which connect us with our fellow-creatures. The detection of mind which accompanies a state of complete solitude; the disposion we have to impart to others our thoughts and feelings; the desire we have of other intelligent and moral natures to sympathize with our own,—all lead us, in the progress of reason and of moral perception, to establish gradually a mental intercourse with the Invisible Witness and Judge of our conduct. An habitual sense of the Divine presence comes at last to be formed. In every object or event that we see we trace the hand of the Almighty, and in the suggestions of reason and conscience we listen to his inspirations. In this intercourse of the heart with God, (an intercourse which enlivens and gladdens the most dessolate scenes, and which dignifies the duties of the meanest station) the supreme felicity of our nature is to be found; and till it is firmly established, there remains a void in every breast which nothing earthly can supply;—a consideration which proves that religion has a foundation in the original principles of our constitution, while it affords us a presage of that immortal happiness which Providence has destined to be the reward of virtue.

Secondly. Although religion can with no propriety be considered as the sole foundation of morality, yet, when we are convinced that God is infinitely good, and that he is the friend and protector of virtue, this belief affords the most powerful inducements to the practice of every branch of our duty. It leads us to consider conscience as the vicegerent of God, and to attend to its sugges-

tions as to the commands of that Being from whom we have received our existence, and the great object of whose government is to promote the happiness and the perfection of his whole creation.

These considerations not only are addressed to our gratitude, but awaken in the mind a sentiment of universal benevolence, and make us feel a relation to every part of the universe. In doing our duty we conceive ourselves as fellow-workers with the Deity, and as willing instruments in his hands for promoting the benevolent purposes of his administration. This is that sublime sentiment of piety and benevolence which we meet with so often in the writings of the ancient Stoics. "Shall any one," says Antoninus, "say, Oh beloved city of Cecrops! and wilt not thou say, Oh beloved city of God?"

In this manner it appears that a sense of religion is favorable to the practice of virtue in *two* respects; *first*, by leading us to consider every act of duty as an expression of gratitude to God; and, *secondly*, as leading us to regard ourselves as parts of that universal system of which he is the Author and Governor. There is another respect in which it is calculated to influence our conduct very powerfully, as it is addressed to our *hopes* and *fears*. In this view religion is a species of authoritative *law* enforced by the most awful sanctions, and of which it is impossible for us by any art to elude the penalties. In the case of the lower orders of men, who are incapable of abstract speculation, and whose moral feelings cannot be supposed to have received much cultivation, it is chiefly this view of religion, as addressed to their *hopes* and *fears*, that secures a faithful discharge of their duties as members of society. In vain would the civil magistrate attempt to preserve the order of society by annexing the penalty of death to heinous offences, if men in general apprehended that there was nothing to be feared beyond the grave. And it is of importance to remark, that this observation applies with peculiar force to the lower orders, who have commonly much less attachment to life than their superiors. Of this truth all wise legislators, both ancient and modern, have been aware, and have seen the necessity of maintaining a sense of

religion among their fellow citizens as the most powerful of all supports to the political order. "Ut aliqua in vitâ formido improbis esset posita, apud inferos ejusmodi quædam illi antiqui supplicia impiis constituta esse voluerunt; quod videlicet intelligebant, his remotis, non esse mortem ipsam pertimescendam." * They, on the other hand, who have labored to loosen the bands of society, have found it necessary to begin with perverting or destroying the natural sentiments of the mind with respect to a future retribution. In ages where the religious principles of the multitude were too firmly riveted to be entirely eradicated, they have inculcated theological dogmas subversive of moral distinctions, as in the case of the Antinomian teachers during our own civil wars. In other and more recent instances they have avowedly attempted to establish a system of atheism. So true is the old observation that the extremes of superstition and of infidelity unite in their tendency, and so completely verified are *now* the apprehensions which were expressed eighty years ago by Bishop Butler, that the spirit of irreligion (which in his time was beginning to grow fashion-

* Cic. Catil. iv.

With these views it is not surprising that some of the wisest of the heathen writers should have expressed themselves so very strongly concerning the guilt incurred by those who, by exposing to ridicule the fabulous mythology which formed the popular creed among their contemporaries, endangered the authority of those moral principles which were identified with it in the vulgar belief. There is good reason for thinking that the secret communicated to the initiated in the Eleusinian mysteries was the unity of God; * a truth too sublime to be disclosed at once to the uninformed multitude, as it struck at the root of all those fables which were incorporated with their habits of thinking and feeling on the most important subjects. On this supposition we have a satisfactory explanation of a noted passage in Horace, between which and the preceding lines it seems not easy at first to trace any connexion.

"Est et fideli tuta silentio
Merces. Vetabo, qui Cereris sacrum
Vulgarit arcanæ, sub iisdem
Sit trabibus, fragilemque mecum
Solvat phaselum." *Carm.* L. iii. Ode 2.

The transition to these lines from the foregoing ones is certainly by no means obvious.

"Virtus, recludens immeritis mori
Cœlum, negatâ tentat iter viâ:
Cœtusque vulgares et udam
Spernit humum fugiente pennâ.
Est et fideli," &c.

* Warburton's Divine Legation of Moses. Voyage du Jeune Anacharsis.

able among the higher ranks) might produce some time or other political disorders similar to those which arose from religious fanaticism in the preceding century.*

A prediction by a later writer of genius and discernment, and one well acquainted with the principles and manners of the world, is not unworthy of attention in the present times, in which we have seen it very remarkably verified in numberless instances. "I shall say nothing at present of the lower ranks of mankind. Though they have not yet got into the fashion of laughing at religion, and treating it with scorn and contempt, and I believe are too serious a set of creatures ever to come into it, yet we are not to imagine but that the contempt it is held in by those whose examples they are too apt to imitate, will in time utterly shake their principles, and render them, if not as profane, at least as corrupt as their betters. When this event happens, and we begin to feel the effects of it in our dealings with them, *those who have done the mischief* will find the necessity at last of turning religious in their own defence, and (for want of a better principle) to set an example of piety and good morals for their own interest and convenience."†

Nor is it merely in restraining men from grosser outrages that a sense of religion operates as a compulsory law. Without a secret impression (of which it is impossible that the human mind can divest itself) that there is at all times an invisible witness of our thoughts, it is probable that the virtue of the best of men would often yield to temptation. Even amidst the darkness of the heathen world Xenophon had recourse to this impression, to account for the inflexible integrity of Socrates, when he sat as one of the judges in the celebrated trial of the naval commanders. "Having taken," says Xenophon, "as was customary, the senatorial oath, by which he bound himself to act in all things conformably to the laws, and arriving in his turn to be president of the assembly of the people, he boldly refused to give his suffrage to

* "Is there no danger that all this may raise somewhat like the levelling spirit upon atheistical principles, which, in the last age, prevailed upon enthusiastic ones? Not to speak of the possibility that different sorts of people may unite in it upon these contrary principles?"—Sermon preached before the House of Lords, January 30, 1740.

† Sterne's Sermons.

the iniquitous sentence which condemned the nine captains, being neither intimidated by the menaces of the great, nor the fury of the people, but steadily preferring the sanctity of an oath to the safety of his person. For he was persuaded the gods watched over the affairs of men in a way altogether different from what the vulgar imagined; for while *these* limited their knowledge to *some* particulars only, Socrates, on the contrary, extended it to all, firmly persuaded that they are every where present, and that every word, every action, nay, even our most retired deliberations were open to their view."

In the *last* place, a sense of religion, where it is sincere, will necessarily be attend with a complete resignation of our own will to that of the Deity, as it teaches us to regard every event, even the most afflicting, as calculated to promote beneficent purposes, which we are unable to comprehend, and to promote, finally, the perfection and happiness of our own nature. This is the best, and indeed the only rational foundation of fortitude. Nay, it may be safely affirmed, (as Socrates long ago observed in the *Phædon* of Plato) that whoever founds his fortitude on any thing else *is only valiant through fear.* In other words, he exposes himself to danger, merely from a regard to the opinion of others, and of consequence wants that internal principle of heroism which can alone arm the mind with patience under those misfortunes which it is condemned to bear in solitude, or under sorrows which prudence conceals from the public eye. But to the man who believes that every thing is ordered for the best, and that his existence and happiness are in the hands of a Being who watches over him with the care of a parent, the difficulties and dangers of life only serve to call forth the latent powers of the soul, by reminding him of the prize for which he combats, and of that beneficent Providence by which the conflict was appointed.

> "Safe in the hands of one disposing Power,
> Or in the natal or the mortal hour."

The view which I have given of *religion* as forming the first and chief branch of moral duty, and as contrib-

uting in its turn most powerfully to promote the practice of every virtue, is equally consonant with the spirit of the Sacred Writings, and to the most obvious dictates of reason and conscience; and accordingly it is sanctioned by the authority of all those philosophers of antiquity who devoted their talents to the improvement and happiness of mankind. "It should never be thought," says Plato in one of his Dialogues, "that there is any branch of human virtue of greater importance than piety towards the Deity." The chief article of the *Unwritten Law* mentioned by Socrates * is, "that the gods ought to be worshipped."—"This," he says, "is acknowledged every where, and received by all men as the first command." And to the same purpose Cicero, in the first book of his Offices, places in the first rank of duties those we owe to the Immortal Gods. "In ipsâ communitate sunt gradus officiorum ex quibus, quid cuique præstet, intelligi possit: ut prima Diis immortalibus; secunda, patriæ; tertia parentibus, deinceps gradatim reliquis, debeantur." †

The elevation of mind which some of the most illustrious characters of antiquity derived from their religious principles, however imperfect and erroneous, and the weight which these principles gave them in their public and political capacity, are remarked by many ancient writers; and such, I apprehend, will be always found to be the case when the personal importance of the individual rests on the basis of public opinion. "But he," says Plutarch, "who was most conversant with Pericles, and most contributed to give him a grandeur of mind, and to make his high spirit for governing the popular assemblies more weighty and authoritative; in a word, who exalted his ideas and raised at the same time the dignity of his demeanour: the person who did this was Anaxagoras the Clazomenian, whom the people of that age reverenced as the first who made *mind* or *intellect* (in opposition to *chance*) a principle in the formation and government of the universe."

The extraordinary respect which the Romans, during

* Xen. Memor. L. iv. c. 4. † Lib. i. c. ult.

their period of greatest glory, entertained for religion (false as their own system was in its mythological foundations, and erroneous in many of its practical tendencies,) has been often taken notice of as one of the principal sources of their private and public virtues. "The Spaniards," says Cicero, "exceed us in numbers; the Gauls in the glory of war; but we surpass all nations in that wisdom by which we have learned that all things are governed and directed by the immortal gods."*

In the later periods of their history this reverence for religion, together with the other virtues which gave them the empire of the world, was in a great measure lost; and we continually find their orators and historians drawing a melancloly contrast between the degeneracy of their manners and those of their ancestors. In the account which Livy has given of the Consulate of Q. Cincinnatus, he mentions an attempt which the tribunes made to persuade the people that they were not bound by their military oath to follow the consul to the field, because they had taken that oath when he was a private man. But, however agreeable this doctrine might be to their inclinations, and however strongly recommended to them by the sanction of their own popular magistrates, we find that their reverence for the religion of an oath led them to treat the doctrine as nothing better than a cavil. Livy's reflection on this occasion is remarkable. "Nondum hæc, quæ nunc tenet sæculum, negligentia Deûm venerat: nec interpretando sibi quisque jusjurandum leges aptas faciebat, sed suos potius mores ad ea accommodabat." †

How completely the sense of religion was afterwards extinguished among the same people, and how intimately *this* change in their character was connected with that political profligacy which ended in the ruin of the commonwealth, may be collected from many passages in the writings of Cicero. "Nunquam audivi in Epicuri scholâ Lycurgum, Solonem, Miltiadem, Themistoclem, Epaminondam, nominari; qui in ore sunt cæterorum om-

* "Sed pietate ac religione, atque hac unâ sapientiâ, quod Deorum immortalium numine omnia regi gubernarique perspeximus, omnes gentes nationesque superavimus."—*Orat. de Haruspicum Responsis*, c. ix.

† Lib. iii. cap. 20.

nium philosophorum." * In his own times he tells us "that the portrait of Epicurus was not only a common article of furniture in their *houses*, but that it formed a common ornament to their rings and vases."—"Nec tamen Epicuri licet oblivisci, si cupiam: cujus imaginem non modo in tabulis nostri familiares, sed etiam in poculis et in annulis habent." †

A review of the political conduct of the distinguished men who appeared at this period, and a comparison of the parts which they acted with the philosophical principles they professed, furnishes an instructive comment on these observations; and goes far to warrant the general inference, that wherever the same pernicious philosophy extends its influence widely among the great body of a people, men are unfitted to enjoy the blessings of rational freedom, and are prepared either to run into the excesses of democratical anarchy, or (what is the natural and inevitable consequences of such excesses) to submit quietly to the yoke of a despotic master.

This last observation I shall have occasion to illustrate afterwards when I come to contrast the practical tendency of the school of Epicurus with that of Zeno.

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* De Fin. ii. c. 21. † Ibid Lib. v. c. 1.

BOOK FOURTH.

OF THE DUTIES WHICH RESPECT OUR FELLOW CREATURES.

UNDER this title it is not proposed to give a complete enumeration of our social duties, but only to point out some of the most important, chiefly with a view to show the imperfections of those systems of morals which attempt to resolve the whole of virtue into one particular principle. Among these, that which resolves virtue into benevolence is undoubtedly the most amiable; but even this system will appear, from the following remarks, to be not only inconsistent with truth, but to lead to dangerous consequences.

CHAPTER FIRST.

OF BENEVOLENCE.

BENEFICENCE is so important a branch of virtue that it has been supposed by some moralists to constitute the whole of it. According to these writers good will to mankind is the only *immediate* object of moral approbation; and the obligation of all our other moral duties arises entirely from their apprehended tendency to promote the happiness of society.

Among the most eminent partisans of this system in modern times, Mr. Smith mentions particularly Dr. Ralph Cudworth, Dr. Henry More, and Mr. John Smith of Cambridge; "but of all its patrons," he observes, "ancient or modern, Dr. Francis Hutcheson was undoubtedly beyond all comparison the most acute, the most distinct, the most philosophical, and what is of the greatest consequence of all, the soberest and most judicious." *

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* Theory of Moral Sentiments, Part vii. Sect. ii. 6th edit.

In favor of this system Mr. Smith acknowledges that there are many appearances in human nature which at first sight seem strongly to support it, and of some of these appearances Dr. Hutcheson avails himself with much acuteness and plausibility. 1. Whenever in any action, supposed to proceed from benevolent affections, some other motive is discovered, our sense of the merit of this action is just so far diminished as this motive is believed to have influenced it. 2. When those actions, on the contrary, which are commonly supposed to proceed from a selfish motive are discovered to have arisen from a benevolent one, it generally enhances our sense of their merit. Lastly, it was urged by Dr. Hutcheson, that in all casuistical disputes concerning the rectitude of conduct, the ultimate appeal is uniformly made to utility. In the later debates, for example, about passive obedience and the right of resistance, the sole point in controversy among men of sense was, whether universal submission would probably be attended with greater evils than temporary insurrections when privileges were invaded. Whether what, upon the whole, tended most to the happiness of mankind was not also morally good, was never once made a question.

Since benevolence, therefore, was the only motive which could bestow upon any action the character of virtue, the greater the benevolence which was evidenced by any action, the greater the praise which must belong to it.

In directing all our actions to promote the greatest possible good,—in submitting all inferior affections to the desire of the general happiness of mankind,—in regarding one's self as but one of the many, whose prosperity was to be pursued no further than it was consistent with, or conducive to that of the whole, consisted the perfection of virtue.

Dr. Hutcheson held further, that self-love was a principle which could never be virtuous in any degree or in any direction. This maxim he carried so far as to assert, that even a regard to the pleasure of self-approbation, to the comfortable applauses of our own consciences, diminishes the merit of a benevolent action.

"In the common judgments of mankind, however," says Mr. Smith, "this regard to the approbation of our own minds is so far from being considered as what can in any respect diminish the virtue of any action, that it is rather looked upon as the sole motive which deserves the appellation of virtuous."

Of the truth and correctness of these principles Dr. Hutcheson was so fully convinced, that in conformity to them he has offered some algebraical formulas for computing mathematically the morality of actions. Of this very extraordinary attempt, the following axioms which he premises to his formulas may serve as a sufficient specimen.

1. The *moral importance* of any agent, or the quantity of public good produced by him, is in a compound ratio of his benevolence and abilities, or M (moment of good) = B × A.

2. In like manner the moment of private good or interest produced by any person to himself is in a compound ratio of his self-love and ability, or I = S × A.

3. When in comparing the virtue of two agents the abilities are equal, the moment of public good produced by them in like circumstances is as the benevolence, or M = B × 1.

4. When benevolence in two agents is equal, and other circumstances alike, the moment of public good is as the abilities, or M = A × 1.

5. The virtue, then, of agents, or their benevolence, is always directly as the moment of good produced in like circumstances, and inversely as their abilities, or $B = \frac{M}{A}$.

As Dr. Hutcheson's example in the use of these formulas has not been followed by any of his successors, it is unnecessary to employ any arguments to expose the absurdity of this unsuccessful innovation in the usual language of ethics.* It is of more consequence to di-

* Dr. Hutcheson's attempt to introduce the language of mathematics into morals gave occasion to a valuable Essay on Proper and Improper Quantity, by the late Dr. Reid. This essay may be found in the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London for the year 1748.

rect our attention to the substance of the doctrine which it was the great object of the ingenious author to establish.

And, in the first place, the necessary and obvious consequences to which this account of virtue leads, seem to furnish a satisfactory proof of its unsoundness. For if the merit of an action depends on no other circumstance than the quantity of good intended by the agent, then the rectitude of an action can in no case be influenced by the mutual relations of the parties; a conclusion contradicted by the universal judgment of mankind in favor of the paramount obligation of various other duties. It is sufficient to mention the obligations of gratitude, of veracity, and of justice.* Unless we admit these duties to be *immediately* obligatory, we must admit the maxim, that a good end may sanctify any means necessary for its attainment; or, in other words, that it would be lawful for us to dispense with the obligations of veracity and justice whenever, by doing so, we had a prospect of promoting any of the essential interests of society.

With respect to this maxim I would only ask, Is it probable *a priori*, that the wise and beneficent Author of the Universe should have left the conduct of such a fallible and short-sighted creature as man to be regulated by no other principle than the private opinion of each individual with respect to the expediency of his actions? Or, in other words, by the conjectures which the individual might form on the good or evil resulting, *on the whole*, from an endless train of future contingencies? Were this the case, the opinions of mankind concerning the rules of morality would be as various as their judgments concerning the probable issue of the most doubtful and difficult determination in politics. Numberless cases might be fancied in which a person would not only *claim* merit to himself, but actually possess it, in consequence of actions which are generally regarded with indignation and abhorrence. Even men of the soundest judgment and most penetrating sagacity might fre-

* See Butler's Essay on the Nature of Virtue, at the end of his Analogy.

quently be led to the perpetration of enormities, if they had no other standard of right and wrong but what they derived from their own uncertain anticipations of futurity. And when we consider how small the number of such men is, in comparison of those whose understandings are perverted by the prejudices of education, and by their own selfish passions, it is easy to see what a scene of anarchy the world would become. Surely if the Deity intended the happiness of his creatures, he would not build the *order* (I may say the *existence*) of society on so precarious a foundation. And here it deserves particularly to be mentioned, that one of the arguments commonly produced in support of the scheme is drawn from the benevolence of God. Benevolence, we are told, induced the Deity to call the universe into existence, and benevolence is the great law of his government: and as virtue in man must consist in conformity to the will of God, in imitating his moral perfections to the utmost of our power, it is concluded that virtue and benevolence are the same. But the premises here lead to a conclusion directly opposite; for if the happiness of mankind be the great end for which they are brought into being, it is presumable that the rules of their conduct are of such a nature as to be obvious to the capacities of all men of sincere and well disposed minds. Accordingly we find, (and the fact is in a peculiar degree worthy of attention) that while the theory of ethics involves some of the most abstruse questions which have ever employed the human faculties, the moral judgments and moral feelings of the most distant ages and nations, with respect to all the most essential duties of life, are one and the same.*

The reasonableness of the foregoing conclusion will be much confirmed if we consider how much the happiness of mankind is often left to depend on the will of one or of a few individuals. The best men in such circumstances, when invested with absolute power, might be rendered curses to the world by sanguine plans of

* "Si quid rectissimum sit quærimus, perspicuum est. Si quid maximè expediat, obscurum."—*Cic. Ep.* ad Fam. iv. 2.

beneficence; and the ambitious and designing would be supplied with specious pretences to justify the most cruel and tyrannical measures. In truth, it is this very plea of benevolent intention which has been employed to palliate, or rather to sanctify, the conduct of the greatest scourges of the human race. It is this very plea which in former times lighted up the fires of the Inquisition; and which in our own age has furnished a pretence for outrages against all the principles of justice and all the feelings of humanity.

These arguments are urged with great ingenuity, and with irresistible force of reasoning, by Mr. Gisborne, in his remarks on Dr. Paley's scheme of morals.

It may perhaps be urged that a regard to utility would lead to an *invariable* adherence to the rules of veracity, gratitude, and justice; because in this way more good is produced on the whole than could be obtained by any occasional deviations from them; that it is this idea of utility which first leads us to approve of these virtues; and that afterwards habit, or the association of ideas, makes us observe their rules without thinking of consequences. But is not this to adopt that mode of reasoning which Hutcheson censures so severely in the selfish philosophers? According to them we labor to promote the public prosperity, because we believe our own to be intimately connected with it. They acknowledge, at the same time, that we often make a real sacrifice of private to public advantage, and that we often exert ourselves in the public service without once thinking of our own interest. But all this they explain by habits and associations, which operate in this case as they do in the case of the miser, who, although his attachment to money was originally founded on the consideration of its uses, yet continues to accumulate wealth without once thinking of the ends to which it is subservient, and indeed long after he is able to enjoy those comforts which it can purchase.

Now the fallaciousness of this mode of reasoning has been pointed out by Dr. Hutcheson with great clearness and force; and the arguments he employs against it may with great justice be turned against himself. In general

the safest rule we can follow in our inquiries concerning the principles of human conduct is to acquiesce, in the first instance, in the plain and obvious appearance of facts; and if these conclusions are inaccurate, to correct them gradually in proportion as a more attentive examination of our subject discovers to us the prejudices which education and accidental associations have blended with the truth. It is at least a presumption in favor of any system concerning the mind, that it falls in with the natural apprehensions of mankind in all countries and ages;—and I believe it will commonly be found that these are the systems which, in the progress of human reason, are justified by the most profound and enlightened philosophy. I state this observation with the greater confidence, as it coincides with the following admirable remark of Mr. hume,—an author who had certainly no interest in inculcating such a doctrine, as he seems to have paid very little attention to it in the course of his own speculations.

"The case is not the same in moral philosophy as in physics. Many an hypothesis in nature, contrary to first appearances, has been found, on more accurate scrutiny, solid and satisfactory. Instances of this kind are so frequent that a judicious as well as witty philosopher * has ventured to affirm, if there be more than one way in which a phenomenon may be produced, that there is a general presumption for its arising from the causes which are the least obvious and familiar. But the presumption always lies on the other side in all inquiries concerning the origin of our passions, and of the internal operations of the human mind. The simplest and most obvious cause which can there be assigned for any phenomenon is probably the true one. When a philosopher, in the explication of his system, is obliged to have recourse to some very intricate and refined reflections, and to suppose them essential to the production of any passion or emotion, we have reason to be extremely on our guard against so fallacious an hypothesis. The affections are not susceptible of any impression from the refinements

* Fontenelle.

of reason or imagination; and it is always found that a vigorous exertion of the latter faculty necessarily, from the limited capacity of the human mind, destroys all activity in the former. Our predominant motive or interest is indeed frequently concealed from ourselves, when it is mingled and confounded with other motives which the mind, from vanity and self-conceit, is desirous of supposing more prevalent; but there is no instance that a concealment of this nature has ever arisen from the abstruseness and intricacy of the motive. A man that has lost a friend and patron may flatter himself that all his grief arises from generous sentiments, without any mixture of narrow or interested considerations; but a man that grieves for a valuable friend who needed his patronage and protection, how can we suppose that his passionate tenderness arises from some metaphysical regards to a self-interest which has no foundation in reality? We may as well imagine that minute wheels and springs, like those of a watch, give motion to a wagon, as account for the origin of passion from such abstruse reflections."

In this passage Mr. Hume has censured very justly the theories which resolve the whole of human conduct into self-love; and I apprehend that the same censure may be extended to that more amiable system which supposes our approbation of justice and veracity, and all our other duties, to arise from their apprehended tendency to promote the happiness of society.

But although it is not any views of utility which originally lead us to approve of veracity and justice, yet it must be acknowledged, that, when a philosopher has once satisfied himself with respect to their real tendency, this consideration strengthens very much his sense of their obligation. And he may sometimes find it necessary to call this consideration to his aid when he is in danger of departing from general rules; as in the case of a judge who is in danger of yielding to the impulse of compassion, till he opposes to it another benevolent affection of a more extensive nature, by reflecting on the *expediency* of adhering to the general rules of justice.

That the practice of veracity and justice, and of all our other duties, is useful to mankind, is acknowledged by moralists of all descriptions; and there is good reason for believing, that, if a person saw all the consequences of his actions, he would perceive that an adherence to their rules is useful and advantageous on the whole, even in those cases in which his limited views incline him to think otherwise. The same observation may be applied to *self-interest*, that the most effectual way of promoting it is to observe religiously the obligations of morality; and these are both very striking instances of that unity of design which is conspicuous both in the moral and natural world. This makes it an easy matter for a philosopher to give a plausible explanation of all our duties from one principle, because the *general tendency* of all of them is to determine us to the same course of life. That benevolence *may be* the sole principle of action in the Deity is possible (although when we affirm that *it is so* we go beyond our depth;) but the case is obviously very different with mankind. If the hypothesis be just with respect to the Deity, we must suppose that he enjoined the duties of veracity and justice, not on account of their intrinsic rectitude, but of their utility. But still with respect to man they are indespensable laws, for he has an immediate perception of their rectitude. And indeed if he had not, but were left to deduce their rectitude from the consequences which they have a tendency to produce, we may venture to affirm that there would not be enough of virtue left in the world to hold society together.

It is remarked by Mr. Smith in a passsage formerly quoted, and which cannot be too frequently recalled to the reader's attention, that "although, in accounting for the operations of bodies, we never fail to distinguish the efficient from the final cause, in accounting for those of the mind we are very apt to confound these two different things with one another. When by natural principles we are led to advance those ends which a refined and enlightened reason would recommend to us, we are very apt to impute to that reason, as to their efficient cause, the sentiments and actions by which we

advance those ends, and to imagine that to be the wisdom of man which in reality is the wisdom of God. Upon a superficial view, this cause seems sufficient to produce the effects which are ascribed to it, and the system of human nature seems to be more simple and agreeable when all its different operations are in this manner deduced from a single principle."

The remarks which I have now made with respect to Dr. Hutcheson's philosophy are applicable, with some slight alterations, to a considerable variety of moral systems which have been offered to the world under very different forms; but which agree with each other in deriving the practical rules of virtuous conduct from considerations of utility. All of these systems are but modifications of the old doctrine which resolves the whole of virtue into benevolence.

This theory of utility (which is of a very ancient date, and which in modern times has derived much celebrity from the genius of Mr. Hume) has been revived more recently by Mr. Godwin, and by the late Dr. Paley. Widely as these two writers differ in the *source* whence they derive their rule of conduct, and the *sanctions* by which they enforce its observance, they are perfectly agreed about its paramount authority over every other principle of action. "Whatever is *expedient*," says Dr. Paley, "is *right*. It is the utility of any moral rule alone which constitutes the obligation of it." *....."But then, it must be expedient *on the whole*, at the long run, in all its effects, collateral and remote, as well as those which are immediate and direct, as it is obvious that, in computing consequences, it makes no difference in what way or at what distance they ensue." † Mr. Godwin

* Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy, Vol. I. p. 70. Fifth Edition.

† Ibid, p. 78.

In another part of this work Dr. Paley explicitly asserts that *every* moral rule is liable to be superseded in particular cases on the ground of expediency. "Moral philosophy cannot pronounce that any rule of morality is so rigid as to bend to no exceptions; nor, on the other hand, can she comprise these exceptions within any previous description. She confesses that the obligation of every law depends upon its ultimate utility; that this utility having a finite and determinate value, situations may be feigned, and consequently may possibly arise, in which the general tendency is outweighed by the enormity of the particular mischief; and of course where ultimate utility renders it as much an act of duty to break the rule as it is on other occasions to observe it."—Vol. II. p. 411.

has no where expressed himself on this fundamental question of practical ethics in terms more decided and unqualified.

The observations quoted from Mr. Smith on the proneness of the mind, in moral speculations, to confound together efficient and final causes, furnish a key to the chief difficulty by which the patrons of this specious but very dangerous system have been misled.

Of this theory of utility, so strongly recommended to some by the powerful talents of Hume, and to others by the well merited popularity of Paley, the most satisfactory of all refutations is to be found in the work of Mr. Godwin. It is unnecessary to inquire how far the practical lessons he has inculcated are logically inferred from his fundamental principle; for although I apprehend much might be objected to these, even on his own hypothesis, yet if such be the conclusions to which, in the judgment of so acute a reasoner, it *appeared* to lead with demonstrative evidence, nothing further is requisite to illustrate the practical tendency of a system which, absolving men from the obligations imposed on them with so commanding an authority by the moral constitution of human nature, abandons every individual to the guidance of his own narrow views concerning the complicated interests of political society.*

Among the practical consequences which Dr. Paley deduces from the same principle, there are some which

* It is remarkable that Mr. Hume, by far the ablest advocate for the theory in question, has indirectly acknowledged its inconsistency with some of the most important facts which it professes to explain. "Though the *heart*," he observes in the fifth section of his Inquiry concerning Morals, "takes no part entirely with those general notions, nor regulates all its love and hatred by the universal abstract differences of vice and virtue, without regard to self, and the persons with whom we are more intimately connected, yet have these moral differences a considerable influence, and being sufficient at least for discourse, serve all the purposes in company, in the theatre, and in the schools." On this passage the following very curious note is to be found at the end of the volume; a note (by the way) which deserves to be added to the other proofs already given of the irresistible influence which the doctrine of final causes occasionally exercises over the most sceptical minds. "*It is wisely ordained by nature*, that private connexions should *commonly* prevail over universal views and considerations, otherwise our affections and actions would be dissipated and lost for want of a proper limited object." Does not this remark imply an acknowledgment, *first*, That the principle of general expediency (the *sole* principle of virtuous conduct, according to Mr. Hume, in our most important transactions with our fellow creatures) would not contribute to the happiness of society *if* men should *commonly* act upon it; and *secondly*, That some provision is made in our moral constitution that we shall, in fact, be influenced by other motives in discharging the offices of private life?

to my mind are not less revolting than those of Mr. Godwin. Such, for example, is the argument by which he controverts the received maxim of criminal jurisprudence, that *it is better for ten guilty persons to escape than for one innocent man to suffer.* But on this subject I need not enlarge. The sophistry, and, I am sorry to add, the reckless inhumanity displayed in this part of Paley's work, have been triumphantly exposed by that great and good man Sir Samuel Romilly;—a man whom, long before his talents and worth were known to the public, I admired and loved, and whose memory I shall never cease to revere.*

From this digression, (if it can be called a digression) with respect to the modern doctrine of utility, I return to Dr. Hutcheson's scheme of benevolence, by which the theory of Mr. Hume was plainly suggested, and to which all the more modern modifications of the same principle may be traced. Indeed, the theory of utility must tacitly take for granted the scheme of benevolence, in order to be complete and consistent. For whence the obligation to consult general utility but from the peculiar approbation with which the duty of benevolence is regarded?

To the strictures already offered on Hutcheson's writings I have only to add, that he seems to consider virtue as a quality of our *affections*, whereas it is really a quality of our *actions;* or (perhaps in strict propriety) of those *dispositions* from which our actions immediately proceed. Our benevolent affections are always amiable, but, in so far as they are constitutional, they are certainly in no respect meritorious. Indeed some of them are common to us with the brutes. When they are possessed in an eminent degree, we may perhaps consider them as a ground of moral esteem, because they indicate the pains which has been bestowed on their cultivation, and a course of active virtue in which they have been exercised and strengthened. On the contrary, a person who wants them is always an object of horror;

* Observations on the Criminal Law of England as it relates to Capital Punishments, and on the way in which it is administered. Printed for Cadell and Davies, 1810. See in particular Note D.

chiefly because we know they are only to be eradicated by long habits of profligacy, and *partly* in consequence of the uneasiness we feel when we see the ordinary course of nature violated, as in a monstrous animal production. It is from these two facts that the plausibility of Dr. Hutcheson's language on this subject in a great measure arises; but if the facts be accurately examined, they will be found perfectly consistent with the doctrine already laid down, that nothing is an object of moral praise or blame but what depends on our own voluntary exertions; and of consequence, that these terms are not applicable to our benevolent or malevolent affections, so far as we suppose them to result necessarily from our constitutional frame.

There is another consideration, too, which, on a superficial view, appears favorable both to Hutcheson's language and system,—the peculiar and enthusiastic admiration with which all mankind regard a man of enlightened and active benevolence. Such a character draws upon itself not merely the *applauses* but the *blessings* of the world, and assimilates human nature to what we conceive of those ministering angels who are the immediate instruments of the Divine goodness and mercy.

In order to think with accuracy on this very important point of morals, it is necessary to distinguish those benevolent affections which urge us to their respective objects by a blind impulse, from that rational and enlightened benevolence which interests us in the happiness of all mankind, and indeed of all the orders of sensitive being. This Divine principle of action appears but little in the bulk of our species; for although the seeds of it are sown in every breast, it requires long and careful cultivation to rear them to maturity; choked as they are by envy, by jealousy, by selfishness, and by those contracted views which originate in unenlightened schemes of human policy. Clear away these noxious weeds, and the genuine benevolence of the human heart will appear in all its beauty. No wonder, then, that we should regard, with such peculiar sentiments of veneration, the character of one whom we consider as *the* sincere and unwearied friend of humanity; for such

a character implies the existence of all the other virtues, more particularly of candid and *just* dispositions towards our fellow creatures, and implies, moreover, a long course of persevering exertion in combating prejudice, and in eradicating narrow and malignant passions. The gratitude, besides, which all men must feel towards one in whose benevolent wishes they know themselves to be comprehended, contributes to enliven the former sentiment of moral esteem; and both together throw so peculiar a lustre on this branch of duty, as goes far to account for the origin of those systems which represent it as the only direct object of moral approbation.

But what I am chiefly anxious to infer at present from these remarks is, that there is nothing in this approbation of a rational and enlightened benevolence which at all invalidates the doctrine, that virtue, in all its branches, supposes a course of voluntary exertion under the guidance of a sense of *duty*.

It may be worth while to add, before leaving the subject, that, when a rational and habitual benevolence forms part of a character, it will render the conduct perfectly uniform, and will exclude the possibility of those inconsistencies that are frequently observable in individuals who give themselves up to the guidance of particular affections, either private or public. How often, for example, do we meet with individuals who have great pretensions to public spirit and even to humanity, on important occasions, who affect an habitual rudeness in the common intercourse of society! The public spirit of such men cannot possibly arise from genuine benevolence, otherwise the same principle of action would extend to every different part of the conduct by which the comfort of other men is affected; and in the case of most individuals, the addition they are able to make to human happiness, by the constant exercise of courtesy and gentleness to all who are within the sphere of their influence, is of far greater amount than all that can result from the more splendid and heroic exertions of their beneficence. A similar remark may be applied to such as are possessed of strong private attachments and of humanity to objects in distress,

while they have no idea of public spirit; and also to those who lay claim to a more than common portion of patriotic zeal, while they avow a contempt for the general interests of humanity. In truth, all those offices, whether apparently trifling or important, which contribute to augment the happiness of our fellow creatures,—civility, gentleness, kindness, humanity, patriotism, universal benevolence,—are only diversified expressions of the same disposition, according to the circumstances in which it operates, and the relation which the agent bears to others.

CHAPTER SECOND.

OF JUSTICE.

THE word *justice*, in its most extensive signification, denotes that disposition which leads us, in cases where our own temper, or passions, or interests are concerned, to determine and to act without being biassed by partial considerations.

I had occasion formerly to observe, that a desire of our own happiness is inseparable from our nature as sensitive and rational beings; or, in other words, that it is impossible to conceive a being capable of forming the ideas of happiness and misery, to whom the one shall not be an object of desire and the other of aversion. On the other hand, it is no less evident that this desire is a principle belonging to such beings *exclusively;* inasmuch as the very idea of *happiness*, or of *what is good for man on the whole*, presupposes the exercise of *reason* in the mind which is able to perform it; and as it is only a being possessed of the power of *self-government* which can pursue steadily this abstract conception, in opposition to the solicitations of present appetite and passion. This *rational self-love* (or in other words, this regard to what is good for us on the whole) is analogous, in some important respects, to that *calm benevolence* which has been already illustrated. They are both characteristical endowments of a rational nature, and they both exert an influence over the conduct in proportion as reason gains an ascendant over prejudice and error, and over those appetites which are common to us and to the brutes.

The inferior principles of action in our nature have all a manifest reference to one or other of these rational principles; for, although they operate without any reflection on our part, they all lead to ends beneficial to the individual or to society. Of this kind are hunger, thirst, the desire of knowledge, the desire of esteem, pity to the distressed, natural affection, and a variety of others. Upon the whole, these two great principles of action, *self-*

love and *benevolence*, coincide wonderfully in recommending one and the same course of conduct; and we have great reason to believe, that, if we were acquainted with all the remote consequences of our actions, they would be found to coincide entirely. There are, however, cases in which there *seems* to be an interference between them; and in such cases the generality of mankind are apt to be influenced more than they ought to be by self-love and the principles which are subsidiary to it. These sometimes lead them to act in direct opposition to their sense of duty; but much more frequently they influence the conduct by suggesting to the judgment partial and erroneous views of circumstances; and by persuading men that the line of their duty coincides with that which is prescribed by interest and inclination. Of all this every man capable of reflection must soon be convinced from experience, and he will study to correct his judgment in cases in which he himself is a party,—either by recollecting the judgments he has formerly passed in similar circumstances on the conduct of others, or by stating cases to himself in which his own interest and predilections are perfectly left out of the question. Now, I use the word *justice* to express that disposition of mind which leads a man, where his own interest or passions are concerned, to determine and to act according to those judgments which he would have formed of the conduct of another placed in a similar situation.

But although I believe that expedients of this sort are necessary to the best of men for correcting their moral judgments in cases in which they themselves are parties, it will not therefore follow (as I have already observed*) that our *only* ideas of right and wrong with respect to our own conduct are derived from our sentiments with respect to the conduct of others. "The intention of such expedients is merely to obtain a just and fair view of circumstances; and after this view has been obtained, the question still remains, what constitutes the obligation upon us to act in a particular manner. It may be said, that, from recollecting my own judgments

* Pages 211, 212, 213. These paragraphs are transcribed here for the sake of connexion.

in similar cases in which I was concerned, I infer in what light my conduct will appear to society;—that there is an exquisite pleasure annexed to mutual sympathy, and that in order to obtain it, in order that other men may go along with my conduct, I accommodate it not to my own feelings but to their judgment. Now I acknowledge that this may account for a man's *assuming* the appearance of virtue, and I believe that something of this sort is the real foundation of the *rules of good breeding in polished society;* but in the important concerns of life I apprehend there is something more; for when I have once satisfied myself with respect to the conduct which an impartial judge would approve of, I feel that this conduct is *right* for me, and that I am under a moral obligation to put it in practice. If I had had recourse to no expedient for correcting my first judgment, I would still have formed some judgment or other of a particular conduct, as right, wrong, or indifferent, and the only difference would have been, that I should probably have decided improperly from a false or a partial view of the case.

"From these observations I conclude, that the words *right*, *wrong*, *ought* and *ought not*, express simple ideas, of which no explanation can be given. They are to be found in all languages, and it is impossible to carry on any moral speculation without them. Even those authors who have rejected the supposition of *a moral faculty*, and who attempt to account for all our moral sentiments by certain modifications of sympathy, find it impossible to avoid the use of these words. Thus when it is acknowledged that the propriety of action cannot be determined in all cases by the *actual* judgment of society, and that in such cases we must act according to the judgments which they *ought* to have formed, is not this to own that we have a standard of right and wrong in our own minds, to which we find it of more consequence to adjust our conduct than to obtain the sympathy of other men?"

I must however remark, in order to prevent misapprehensions, that, if any person objects to the expressions *moral sense* or *moral faculty*, I do not take upon

me to defend their propriety. I use them because they are commonly employed by ethical writers of late, and because I do not think them liable to misinterpretation after the explanation of them I formerly gave. I certainly do not consider them as expressing an implanted relish for certain qualities of actions analogous to our relish for certain tastes and smells. All I contend for is, that the words *right* and *wrong*, *ought* and *ought not*, express simple ideas; that our perception of these qualities in certain actions is an ultimate fact of our nature; and that this perception always implies the idea of moral obligation. When I speak of a moral sense or a moral faculty, I mean merely to express the power we have of forming these ideas; put I do not suppose that this bears any more analogy to our external senses than the power we have of forming the simple ideas of *number*, of *time*, or of *causation*, which all arise in the mind, we cannot tell how, when certain objects or certain events are perceived by the understanding. If those ideas were as important as those of right and wrong, or had been as much under the review of philosophers, we might perhaps have had a *sense of time*, *a sense of number*, and a *sense of causation*. And in fact something very like this language occurs in the writings of Lord Kames.

It is observed by Mr. Smith, as an argument against the existence of a moral sense or moral faculty, that these words are of very recent origin, and that it must appear very strange that a principle, which Providence undoubtedly intended to be the governing one of human nature, should hitherto have been so little taken notice of as not to have got a name in any language. If this observation is levelled merely at these two expressions, I have already said that I do not mean to defend them; but if it is to be understood as implying that the words *right* and *wrong*, *ought* and *ought not*, do not express simple ideas, I must take the liberty of remarking, in opposition to it, that, although the words *moral sense* and *moral faculty* are of late origin, this is by no means the case with the word *conscience*. It is indeed said that this word (*conscience*) "does not immediately

denote any moral faculty by which we approve or disapprove ;—that it supposes indeed the existence of some such faculty, but that it properly signifies our consciousness of having acted agreeably or contrary to its directions." * But the truth I take to be this, that the word *conscience* coincides exactly with the moral faculty, with this difference only, that the former refers to our own conduct alone, whereas the latter is meant to express also the power by which we approve or disapprove of the conduct of others. Now if this be granted, and if it be allowed that the former word is to be found in all languages, and that the latter is only a modern invention, is it not a natural inference, that our judgments, with respect to our own conduct are not merely applications to ourselves of those we have previously formed with respect to the conduct of our fellow creatures ? †

I have taken this opportunity of making a few additional remarks on Mr. Smith's theory, because it is the virtue of justice which furnishes the most plausible illustrations in support of it. But although I do not think it accounts for the origin of our ideas of right and wrong and of moral obligation, I acknowledge that it throws much light on the means which nature has suggested to us for correcting our moral judgments, and has led to the observation of some very important facts with respect to a part of our constitution which had formerly almost entirely escaped the notice of philosophers. I now proceed to some observations of a more practical nature, which the consideration of justice suggests.

It would be endless to attempt to point out all the various forms in which the disposition formerly defined will display itself in life. I must content myself with mentioning one or two of its most remarkable effects, merely as examples of the influence it is likely to have on the conduct. One of the most important of these is that temper of mind we express by the word *candor*,

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* Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments, vol. ii. p. 355. Sixth Edition.

† Mr. Smith (as I formerly hinted) was probably led at first into this train of thinking by his predecessor and preceptor, Dr. Hutcheson, according to whom the words *ought* and *obligation* are too *confused* to be admitted into philosophical discussions. "As to that confused word *(ought)* it is needless to apply to it again all that was said about *obligation*."—*Illustrations of the Moral Sense*, end of sec. i.

which prevents our judgments with respect to other men, from being improperly biassed by our passions and prejudices. This, although at bottom the disposition is the same, may be considered in three lights: 1. As it is displayed in appreciating the talents of others. 2. In judging of their intentions. 3. In controversy.

1. There is no principle more deeply implanted in the mind than the love of fame and of distinction, and there is none which, when properly regulated, is subservient to more valuable purposes. It is, at the same time, a principle which it is perhaps as difficult to restrain within the bounds of moderation as any other. In some ungoverned minds it seems to get the better of every other principle of action, and must be a source to the possessor of perpetual mortification and disgust, by leading him to aspire at eminence in every different line of ambition, and to repine if in any one of them he is surpassed by others. In the midst of the astonishing projects which employed the sublime genius of Richelieu, his peace of mind was completely ruined by the success of the *Cid* of Corneille. The first appearance of this tragedy (according to Fontenelle) alarmed the Cardinal as much as if he had seen the Spaniards at the gates of Paris; and the most acceptable flattery which his minions could offer, was to advise him to eclipse the fame of Corneille by a tragedy of his own. Nor did he aim merely at adding the fame of a poet to that of a stateman. Mortified to think that any one path of ambition was shut against him, he is said, when on his death bed, to have held some conversations with his confessor about the possibility of his being canonized as a saint. In order to restrain this violent and insatiable desire within certain bounds, there are many checks appointed in our constitution. In the first place, it can be *completely* gratified only by the actual possession of those qualities for which we wish to be esteemed, and of those advantages which are the proper grounds of distinction. A good man is never more mortified than when he is praised for qualities he does not possess, or for advantages in which he is conscious he has no merit. Secondly, although the gratification of this principle consists

in a certain superiority over other men, we feel that we are not entitled to take undue advantages of them. We may exert ourselves to the utmost in the race of glory, but we are not entitled to obstruct the progress of others, or to detract from their reputation in order to advance our own. All this will be readily granted in general; and yet in practice there is surely nothing more difficult than to draw the line between emulation and envy; or to check that self-partiality which, while it leads us to dwell on our own advantages, and to magnify them in our own estimation, prevents us either from attending sufficiently to the merits of others, or from viewing them in the most favorable light. Of this difficulty a wise and good man will soon be satisfied from his own experience, and he will endeavour to guard against it as far as he is able, by judging of the merits of a rival or even of an enemy, as he would have done if there had been no interference between them. He will endeavour, in short, to do *justice* to their merits, not merely in words but in sincerity, and bring himself, if possible, to love and to honor that genius and ability which have eclipsed his own. Nor will he retire in disgust from the race because he has been outstripped by others, but will redouble all his exertions in the service of mankind; recollecting, that, if nature has been more partial to others in her intellectual gifts than to him, she has left open to all the theatre of virtue, where the merits of individuals are determined, not by their actual attainments, but by the use and improvement they make of those advantages which their situation has afforded them. In the meantime he will suffer no permanent mortification from the disappointment of his ambition; but from his exertions to suppress every emotion of envy, and to conquer the mean partialities of vanity and self-love, he will derive a satisfaction with himself and a sense of his own elevation, of a still more flattering kind than all the splendor of ability can bestow. I must not omit to add, that the love of fame and of distinction, where it is strong, is commonly united with a certain degree of genius, and is seldom to be found in men wholly destitute of it. While those, therefore, that are under the influence of

this passion see a few raised *above* them, let them recollect their own superiority to the multitude, and study to make the only return in their power for this partiality of nature, by devoting their talents, such as they are, to diffuse in the world *truth, virtue, and happiness.*

2. Candor in judging of the intentions of others. I before mentioned several considerations which render it highly probable that there is much less vice or criminal intention in the world than is commonly imagined, and that the greater part of the disputes among mankind arise from mutual mistake and misapprehension. Every man must recollect many instances in which his motives have been grossly misapprehended by the world; and it is but reasonable for him to conclude that the case may have been the same with other men. It is but an instance, then, of that *justice* we owe to others, to make the most candid allowances for their apparent deviations, and to give every action the most favorable construction it can possibly admit of. Such a temper, while it renders a man respectable and amiable in society, contributes perhaps more than any other circumstance to his private happiness. "When you would cheer your heart," says Marcus Antoninus, "consider the excellencies and abilities of your several acquaintance; the activity of one, the high sense of honor and modesty of another, the liberality of a third, and in other persons some other virtue. There is nothing so delightful as Virtue appearing in the conduct of your contemporaries as frequently as possible. Such thoughts we should still retain with us." *

3. Candor in controversy implies a strong sense of justice united to a disinterested love of truth,—two qualities which are so nearly allied that they can scarcely be supposed to exist separately. The latter guards the mind against error in its solitary speculations, the former imposes an additional check when the irritation of dispute disturbs the cool exercise of the understanding. Where they are thus displayed in their joint effect, they evince the purity of that moral rectitude in which the essence of both consists; but so rarely is

* Book vi. c. 48.

this combination exhibited in human life, even in the character of those who maintain the fairest reputation for justice and for veracity, as to warrant the conclusion, that these virtues (so effectually secured to a certain extent by compulsory law or by public opinon) are, in a moral point of view, of fully as difficult attainment as any of the others.

I formerly observed that the *love of truth* is natural to the mind independently of all views of utility, and that a strong curiosity properly directed is one of the chief constituents of genius. Without this stimulus and guide in our inquiries, ingenuity and industry only serve to lead us the further astray from our object: And it is much to be regretted that there are so few cases in which those different qualities are all found united in the same person. Various circumstances indeed oppose themselves to this happy but rare combination; in particular the affection of singularity; an impatience in the study of particulars arising from an anxiety to grasp prematurely at general principles; and that aversion which the timid and the indolent feel to abandon their habitual opinions.

But perhaps there is no temper which so completely disqualifies us for the search of truth, as that which we experience when provoked by controversy or dispute. Some men undoubtedly are more misled by it than others; but I apprehend there is no one, however modest and unassuming, who will not own that, upon such occasions, he has almost always felt his judgment warped, and a desire of victory mingle itself, in spite of all his efforts, with his love of truth. Hence the aversion which all such men feel for controversy; convinced from experience how likely it would be to betray themselves into error, and unwilling to afford an opportunity for displaying the envious and malignant passions of others. This amiable disposition has been often mentioned by the friends of Sir Isaac Newton as one of the most marked features in his character; and we are even told that it led him to suppress, for a course of years, some of his most important discoveries, which he knew, from their nature, were likely to provoke opposition. "He was

indeed," says one of his biographers, "of so meek and gentle a disposition, and so great a lover of peace, that he would have rather chosen to remain in obscurity, than to have the calm of life ruffled by those storms and disputes which genius and learning always draw upon those who are most eminent for them.

"From his love of peace arose, no doubt, that unusual kind of horror which he felt for all disputes. Steady, unbroken attention, free from those frequent recoilings incident to others, was his peculiar felicity. He knew it, and he knew the value of it. When some objections hastily made to his discoveries concerning light and colors, inducing him to lay aside the design he had taken of publishing his Optical Lectures, we find him reflecting on that dispute into which he had unavoidably been drawn, in these terms: 'I blamed my own imprudence for parting with so real a blessing as my quiet, to run after a shadow.' In the same temper, after he had sent the manuscript to the Royal Society, with his consent to the printing of it, upon Hook's injuriously insisting that he had himself solved Kepler's Problem before our author, he determined, rather than be involved again in a controversy, to suppress the third book; and he was very hardly prevailed on to alter that resolution." *

I shall only add further on this head, that a love of controversy indicates not only an overweening vanity and a disregard for truth, but in general, perhaps always, it indicates a mediocrity of genius; for it arises from those feelings of envy and jealousy which provoke little minds to depreciate the merit of useful discoveries. He who is conscious of his own inventive powers, and whose great object is to add to the stock of human knowledge, will reject unwillingly any plausible doctrine till after the most severe examination, and will separate, with patience and temper, the truths it contains from the errors that are blended with them. No opinion can be more groundless than that a captious and disputatious temper is a mark of acuteness. On the contrary, a sound and manly understanding is in no instance more

* Hutton's Mathematical Dictionary.

strongly displayed than in a quick perception of important truth when imperfectly stated and blended with error; a perception which may not be sufficient to satisfy the judgment completely at the time, or at least to obviate the difficulties of others, but which is sufficient to prevent it from a hasty rejection of the whole, from the obvious defects of some of the parts. Hence the important hints which an author of genius collects among the rubbish of his predecessors; and which so far from detracting from his own originality, place it in the strongest possible light, by showing that an idea which was already current in the world, and which had hitherto remained barren and useless, may, in the mind of a philosopher, become the germ of an extensive system.

I cannot help taking this opportunity of remarking, (although the observation is not much connected with the subject in which we are engaged) that something similar to this may be applied to our critical judgments in the fine arts. It is easy to perceive blemishes, but it is the province of genius alone to have a quick perception of beauties, and to be eager to applaud them. And it is owing to this that of all critics a dunce is the severest, and a man of genuine taste the most indulgent.

> "Yes, they whom genius and true taste inspire,
> Blame not with half the pleasure they admire;
> Each trifling fault unwillingly descry,
> And view the beauties with a raptured eye." *

In the very elegant and interesting life of Mr. Harris, published by his son, there is no circumstance more honorable at once to his head and heart, than what is mentioned in the following passage.

"It was with him a maxim that the *most difficult*, and infinitely the preferable sort of criticism, both in literature and in the arts, was that which consists in finding out beauties rather than defects. And, although he certainly wanted not judgment to distinguish and to prefer superior excellence of any kind, he was too reasonable to expect it should very often occur, and too wise

* William Melmoth.

to allow himself to be disgusted with common weakness and imperfection. He thought indeed that the very attempt to please, however it might fall short of its aim, deserved some return of thanks, some degree of approbation; and that to endeavour at being pleased by such efforts was due to justice, to good nature, and to good sense."

The foregoing illustrations are stated at some length, in order to correct those partial definitions of justice which restrict its province to a rigorous observance of the rules of integrity or honesty in our dealings with our fellow creatures. So far as this last disposition proceeds from a sense of duty, uninfluenced by human laws, it coincides exactly with that branch of virtue which has been now described under the title of Candor.

In the instances hitherto mentioned, the disposition of justice has been supposed to operate in restraining the partialities of the temper and passions. There are, however, no instances in which its influence is more necessary than where our *interest* is concerned; or, to express myself more explicitly, where there is an apparent interference between our *rights* and those of other men. In such cases a disposition to observe the rules of justice is called *integrity* or *honesty*,—which is so important a branch of justice that it has in a great measure appropriated the name to itself. The observations made by Mr. Hume and Mr. Smith on the differences between justice and the other virtues apply only to this branch of it; and it is this branch which properly forms the subject of that part of ethics which is called *Natural Jurisprudence*.* In what remains of this chapter, when the word *justice* occurs, it is to be understood in the limited sense now mentioned.

The circumstances which distinguish justice from the other virtues are chiefly two. In the first place, its rules may be laid down with a degree of accuracy of which moral precepts do not in any other instance admit. Secondly, its rules may be enforced, inasmuch as

* Theory of Moral Sentiments, Vol. II. p. 365, *et seq.*

every breach of them violates the rights of some other person and entitles him to employ force for his defence or security.

Another distinction between justice and the other virtues is much insisted on by Mr. Hume. It is, according to him, an artificial and not a natural virtue, and derives all its obligations from the political union, and from considerations of utility. The principal argument alleged in support of this proposition is, that there is no implanted principle, prompting us by a blind impulse to the exercise of justice, similar to those affections which conspire with and strengthen our benevolent dispositions. But, granting the fact upon which this argument proceeds, nothing can be inferred from it that makes an essential distinction between the obligations of justice and of beneficence; for so far as we act merely from the blind impulse of an affection, our conduct cannot be considered as virtuous. Our affections were given us to arrest our attention to particular objects, whose happiness is connected with our exertions; and to excite and support the activity of the mind, when a sense of duty might be insufficient for the purpose: but the propriety or impropriety of our conduct depends in no instance on the strength or weakness of the affection, but on our obeying or disobeying the dictates of reason and of conscience. These inform us, in language which it is impossible to mistake, that it is sometimes a duty to check the most amiable and pleasing emotions of the heart;—to withdraw, for example, from the sight of those distresses which stronger claims forbid us to relieve, and to deny ourselves that exquisite luxury which arises from the exercise of humanity. So far, therefore, as benevolence is a virtue, it is precisely on the same footing with justice; that is, we approve of it, not because it is agreeable to us, but because we feel it to be a duty.

It may be further remarked, that there are very strong implanted principles which serve as checks on *injustice;* the principles, to wit, of resentment and of indignation, which are surely as much a part of the human constitution as pity or parental affection. These principles imply a sense of injustice, and consequently of justice.

In one remarkable instance, too, nature has made an additional provision for keeping alive among men a sense of those obligations which justice imposes. That the good offices which we have received from others constitute a *debt* which it is morally incumbent on us to discharge by all lawful means in our power, is acknowledged in the common form of expression employed on such occasions, both by philosophers and the vulgar. As the obligations of gratitude, however, do not admit (like the rules of honesty, strictly so called) of support from the magistrate, nature has judged it proper to enforce their observance by one of the most irresistible and delightful impulses of the human frame. According to this view of the subject, gratitude, considered as a moral duty, is a branch of justice recommended to us in a peculiar manner by those pleasing emotions which accompany all the modes of benevolent affection. It is at the same time a branch of what was formerly called rational benevolence, not interfering with the duty we owe to mankind in general, but tending, in a variety of respects, to augment the sum of social happiness. The casuistical questions to which this part of ethics has given rise, however perplexing some of them may appear in theory, seldom, if ever, occasion any hesitation in the conduct of those to whom a sense of duty is the acknowledged rule of action:—Such is the harmony among all the various parts of our constitution, when subjected to the control of reason and conscience; and so nearly allied are the dispositions which prompt to the different offices of a virtuous life.

As the rules of justice, when applied to questions involving the rights of other men, admit in their statement of a degree of accuracy peculiar to themselves, that part of ethics which relates to them has been formed in modern times into a separate branch of the science, under the title of Natural Jurisprudence. The manner in which this subject has been hitherto treated has been much influenced by the professional habits of those who first turned their attention to it. Not only have its principles been delivered in the form of a system of law,

but the technical arrangements of the Roman code have been servilely copied.

What I mean by *stating the principles of Jurisprudence in the form of a system of law* will appear from the following observations.

In the case of justice there is always a *right* on one hand corresponding to an *obligation* on the other. If I am under an obligation, for example, to abstain from violating the property of my neighbour, he has a right to defend by force his property when invaded. It therefore appears that the rules of justice may be laid down in two different forms, either as a system of duties, or as a system of rights. The former view of the subject belongs properly to the moralist, the latter to the lawyer. It is in this last form accordingly that the principles of justice have been stated by the writers on natural jurisprudence.

So far there is nothing to be reprehended in the plan they have followed. On the contrary, a considerable advantage was gained in point of method by adopting that very comprehensive and accurate division of our rights which the civilians had introduced. As the whole object of law is to protect men in all that they may lawfully *do*, or *possess*, or *demand*, civilians have defined the word *jus*, or *right*, to be *facultas aliquid agendi, vel possidendi, vel ab alio consequendi*,—a lawful claim to do any thing, to possess any thing, or to demand something from some other person. The first of these may be called the right of liberty, or the right of employing the powers we have received from nature in every case in which we do not injure the rights of others; the second, the right of property; the third, the rights arising from contract. The two last were further distinguished from each other by calling the former (to wit, the right of property) a *real* right, and the latter (to wit, the rights arising from contract) *personal* rights, because they respect some particular person or persons from whom the fulfilment of the contract may be required.

This division of our rights appears to be comprehensive and philosophical, and it affords a convenient ar-

rangement for exhibiting an indirect view of the different duties which justice prescribes. "What I have a right to do, it is the duty of my fellow creatures to allow me to do without molestation. What is my property, no man ought to take from me, or to disturb me in the enjoyment of it. And what I have a right to demand of any man it is his duty to perform." * Such a system, therefore, with respect to our rights, exhibits (though in a manner somewhat indirect and artificial) a system of the rules of justice.

But the writers on natural jurisprudence have not been contented with copying from the Roman law the great divisisons of their subject. In consequence of that influence of professional habits which we may remark daily on the most vigorous, and in other respects the most enlightened understandings, they have been led to follow the Roman code in many unnatural and capricious arrangements; and what is worse, they have substituted some of its most absurd principles as maxims of natural justice. To the same cause may be ascribed the frivolous discussions with respect to minute and imaginary questions, which so often occupy the place of those general and fundamental disquisitions that are suggested by the common nature and the common circumstances of the human race. It is sufficient to mention the space which is occupied in most systems of jurisprudence, with an explanation of the different methods of acquiring property by *accession*, and with a discussion of the various imaginary cases that may be supposed when the properties of different individuals may happen to be thus confounded.

A still more material inconvenience has resulted from the professional habits of the early writers on jurisprudence. Not contented with stating the rules of justice in that form and language which was most familiar to their own minds, they have attempted to extend the same plan to all the other branches of moral philosophy; and, by the help of arbitrary definitions, to supersede the necessity of accommodating their modes of inquiry to

* Reid on the Active Powers, p. 338. Quarto Edition.

the various nature of their subject. Although justice is the only branch of virtue in which there is always a right on the one hand, corresponding to an obligation on the other, they have contrived, by fictions of *imperfect* and of *external* rights, to treat indirectly of all our different duties, by pointing out the rights which are supposed to be their correlates. It is chiefly owing to this that a study which, in the writings of the ancients, is the most engaging and the most useful of any, has become in so great a proportion of modern systems as uninviting and almost as useless as the logic of the schoolmen.

Besides these defects in the modern systems of jurisprudence, (defects produced by the accidental habits of those who first cultivated the study) there is another essential one arising from the object of the science. Although the obligations of justice are by no means resolvable into considerations of utility, yet in every political association they are so blended together in the institutions of men, that it is impossible for us to separate them completely in our reasonings. And accordingly (as Mr. Hume has remarked) the writers on jurisprudence, while they profess to confine themselves entirely to the former, are continually taking principles for granted which have a reference to the latter. It seems, therefore, to be proper, instead of treating of jurisprudence merely as a system of natural justice, to unite it with politics, and to illustrate the general principles of justice and of expediency, as they are actually combined in the constitution of society. This view of the subject (which properly belongs to the consideration of man as the member of a political body) will show, at the same time, how happily these principles coincide in their application; and how partial those conceptions of utility are, which have so often led politicians to depart from what they felt to be just, in quest of what their limited judgment apprehended to be expedient.

SUPPLEMENT TO CHAPTER SECOND.

THE following observations on the *Right of Property* are introduced here chiefly with a view of illustrating a remark in the foregoing chapter, that we possess rights antecedent to the establishment of the political union. The greater part of them have a reference to the Essay on Property in Lord Kames's Historical Law Tracts.*

It cannot, I apprehend, be doubted, that, according to the notions to which we in the present state of society are habituated from our infancy, the three following things are included in the idea of property.

1. A right of exclusive enjoyment.

2. A right of inquiry after our property when taken away without our consent, and of reclaiming it wherever found.

3. A right of transference.

We do not consider our property in any object to be complete, unless we can exercise all these three rights with respect to it.

Lord Kames endeavours to show that these ideas are not agreeable to the apprehensions of the human mind in the ruder periods of society, but imply a refinement and abstraction of thought which are the result of improvement in law and government. The relation (in particular) of property, independent of possession, he thinks of too metaphysical a nature for the mind of a savage. "It appears to me," says he, "to be highly probable, that among savages involved in objects of sense, and strangers to abstract speculation, property, and the rights or moral powers arising from it, never are with accuracy distinguished from the natural powers that must be exerted upon the subject to make it profitable to the possessor. The man who kills and eats, who sows and reaps, at his own pleasure, independent of another's will, is naturally deemed proprietor. The grossest savages understand power without right, of which they are made sensible by daily acts of violence; but

* Tract iii. Third Edition.

property without possession is a conception too abstract for a savage, or for any person who has not studied the principles of law." *

With this remark I cannot agree; because I think the right of property is founded on a natural sentiment, which must be felt in full force in the lowest state of society. The sentiment I allude to is that of a moral connexion between labor and a right of exclusive enjoyment to the fruits of it. This connexion it will be proper to illustrate more particularly.

Let us suppose, then, a country so fertile as to produce all the necessaries and accommodations of life without any exertions of human industry; it is manifest, that in such a state of things no man would think of appropriating to himself any of these necessaries or accommodations any more than we in this part of the globe think of appropriating air or water. As this, however, is not in any part of the earth, the condition of man, doomed as he is, by the circumstances of his birth, to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow, it would be reasonable to expect, *a priori*, that nature would make some provision for securing to individuals the fruits of their industry. In fact, she *has* made such a provision in the natural sentiments of mankind, which lead them to consider industry as entitled to reward, and in particular, the laborer as entitled to the fruit of his own labor. These, I think, may be fairly stated as *moral axioms*, to which the mind yields its assent, as immediately and necessarily as it does to any axiom in mathematics or metaphysics.

How cruel is the mortification we feel when we see an industrious man reduced by some unforeseen misfortune to beggary in old age! We can scarcely help complaining of the precarious condition of humanity, and that man should be doomed to be the sport of accident: And we feel ourselves called on, as far as we are able, to repair, by our own liberality, this unjust distribution of the goods of fortune. On the other hand, it is difficult to avoid some degree of dissatisfaction when we see

* Tract iii. p. 90. Third Edition.

the natural and deserved reward of industry acquired all at once by a prize in the lottery or by gaming, although in this instance the uneasiness (as might be expected from the natural benevolence of the human mind) is trifling in comparison of what it is in the other case. Our dissatisfaction in particular instances is much greater when we see the laborer deprived by accident of the *immediate* fruit of his own labor;—when, for example, he has nearly completed a complicated machine, and some delicate part of it gives way and renders all his toil useless.

If another person interferes with the fruit of his industry, our dissatisfaction and indignation are still more increased. We feel here a variety of sentiments. 1. A dissatisfaction that the laborer does not enjoy that reward to which his industry entitled him. 2. A dissatisfaction that another person, who did not labor, should acquire the possession of an object of value. And 3. An indignation against the man who deprived the laborer of his just reward.

This sentiment, "that the laborer deserves the fruit of his own labor," is the *chief*, (or rather abstracting from positive institution) the *only* foundation of the sense of property. An attempt to deprive him of it is a species of *injustice* which rouses the indignation of every impartial spectator; and so deeply are these principles implanted in our nature, that we cannot help feeling some degree of remorse when we deprive even a hive of bees of that provision which they had industriously collected for their own use.

The writers, indeed, on natural law ascribe in general the origin of property to priority of occupancy, and have puzzled themselves in attempting to explain how this act should appropriate to an individual what was formerly in common. Grotius and Puffendorff insist that this right of occupancy is founded upon a tacit but understood assent of all mankind, that the first occupant should become the owner. And Barbeyrac, Locke, and others, that the very act of occupancy alone, being a degree of bodily labor, is, from a principle of natural justice, without any compact, a sufficient foundation of property.

Blackstone, although he thinks that the dispute about the manner in which occupancy conveys a right of property, savours too much of scholastic refinement, expresses no doubt about its having this effect independent of positive institutions.*

Some later philosophers have founded the right of property on the general sympathy of mankind with the *reasonable* expectation which the occupant has formed of enjoying unmolested the object he has got possession of, or of which he was the first discoverer; and on the indignation felt by the impartial spectator when he sees this reasonable expectation disappointed. This theory (which I have been assured from the best authority was adopted by Mr. Smith in his lectures on Jurisprudence) seems to have been suggested by a passage in Dr. Hutcheson's Moral Philosophy, in which he says, that "it is immoral, when we can support ourselves otherwise, to defeat any innocent design of another; and that on this immorality is founded the regard we owe to the claims of the first occupant." In this theory, too, it is taken for granted that priority of occupancy founds a right of property, and that such a right may even be acquired by having accidentally *seen* a valuable object before it was observed by any other person.

In order to think with accuracy on this subject, it is necessary to distinguish carefully the complete right of property which is founded on labor, from the transient right of possession which is acquired by mere priority of occupancy. Thus, before the appropriation of land, if any individual had occupied a particular spot for repose or shade, it would have been *unjust* to deprive him of the possession of it. This, however, was only a transient right. The spot of ground would again become *common* the moment the occupier had left it; that is, the *right* of possession would remain no longer than the *act* of possession. Cicero illustrates this happily by the similitude of a theatre. "Quemadmodum theatrum, cum commune sit, recte tamen dici potest ejus esse eum locum quem quisque occupârit." †

* See his Comm. Book. ii. Chap. 1.

† De Finibus, L. iii. c. 20.

The general conclusions which I deduce from the foregoing observations are these:

1. That in every state of society labor, wherever it is exerted, is understood to found a right of property.

2. That, according to natural law, (in the sense at least in which the phrase is commonly employed by writers on jurisprudence) labor is the *only* original way of acquiring property.

3. That, according to natural law, mere occupancy founds only a right of possession; and that, wherever it founds a complete right of property, it owes its force to positive institutions.

An attention to these conclusions, in particular to the distinction between the transient right of possession founded on occupancy, and the permanent right of property founded on labor, will, if I am not mistaken, clear up some of the difficulties which involve the first steps in the history of property, according to the view of the subject given by Lord Kames; and it was with this view I was led to premise these general principles to the slight historical sketch I am now to offer.

With respect to that system which refers the origin of property to the political union and to considerations of utility, it seems sufficient to observe, that so far is government from *creating* this *right*, that its necessary effect is to subject it to certain limitations. Abstracting from the political confederation, every man's property is solely at his own disposal. He is supreme judge in his own cause, and may defend what he conceives to be his right as far as his power reaches. In the state of civil society his property is regulated by positive laws, and he must acquiesce in the judgment of his superiors with respect to his rights, even in those cases where he feels it to be unjust.

From the passage already quoted from Kames, it appears that he conceived the idea of property without possession to be of too abstract and metaphysical a nature to be apprehended by a savage; and he has collected a variety of facts to prove, that, according to common notions of mankind, in the infancy of jurisprudence, the *right* of property is understood to cease the moment

that possession is at an end. But on a more attentive examination of the subject, I apprehend it will be found that the ideas of savages, with respect to property, are the same with ours; that mere occupancy without labor founds only a right of possession; and that labor, wherever it is employed, founds an exclusive and permanent right to the fruits of it. Lord Kames's theory has obviously been suggested by the common doctrine with respect to the right of property being founded in priority of occupancy, compared with the acknowledged fact, that among rude nations occcupancy does not establish a permanent right. The other arguments which he has alleged in support of his opinion will be found to be equally inconclusive.

Before I proceed to the consideration of these it may be proper to observe, that we must not always form an idea of the sentiments of men from the *defects* of their laws. The existence indeed of a law is a proof of the sentiments which men felt when the law was made; but the defects of a law are not always proofs that men did not feel that there *were* disorders in the state of society which required correction. The laws of a country may not make provision for reparation to the original proprietor in the case of theft; but it will not follow from this that men do not apprehend the original proprietor to have any *right* when his property has been stolen from him. The application of this general remark to some of the arguments I am now to consider will, I hope, be so obvious, as to render it unnecessary for me to point it out particularly.

Among these arguments, one of the most plausible is founded on a general principle, which appears, from a variety of facts quoted by Kames, to run through most rude systems of jurisprudence, that, in the case of stolen goods, the claim of the *bonâ fide* purchaser is preferable to that of the original proprietor. This he accounts for from the imperfect notions they have of the metaphysical nature of property when separated from possession. But if this were the case, the same laws should support the claim of the *thief* against the original proprietor: or rather, indeed, neither the original proprietor, nor any

one else, could conceive that he had any connexion with the object stolen the moment after it was out of his possession. The fact is, that this respect paid to the *bonâ fide* purchaser is a proof not of any misapprehension with respect to the idea of property, but of a weak government and an imperfect police. Where thefts are easily committed, and where no public fairs or markets are established, it would put a complete end to all transferences of property, if the *bonâ fide* purchaser were left exposed to the claims of former proprietors. Such a practice would be attended with still greater inconveniences than arise from the casual violations of property by theft; not to mention that the regard shown to the *bonâ fide* purchaser must have a tendency to repress theft, by redoubling the attention of individuals to preserve the actual possession of their property. That these or some other views of utility were the real foundation of the laws quoted by Kames, is confirmed by an old regulation in our own country, prohibiting buying and selling, except in open market,—a regulation which had obviously been suggested by the experience of the inconveniences arising from the latent claims of former proprietors against *bonâ fide* purchasers.

Another argument mentioned by Kames in support of his theory is founded on the shortness of the term which completes prescription among rude nations; a single year, for example, in the case of moveables, by the oldest law of the Romans. This law, he says, testifies that property, independent of possession, was considered to be a *right of the slenderest kind.* It is evident, that, upon his own principles, it should not in that state of society have been considered as a right at all. If it was conceived to subsist a single day after the possession was at an end, the metaphysical difficulty which he magnifies so much was obviously surmounted. In every society it will be found expedient to fix some term for prescription, and the particular length of it must be determined by the circumstances of the society at the time. In general, as law improves, and government becomes more effectual, a greater attention to the stability of property, and consequently a longer term for prescription, may be expected.

The community of goods which is said to take place among some rude nations will be found, on examination, to be perfectly consistent with the account I have given of their ideas on the subject of property. Where the game is taken by a common effort, the natural sense of justice dictates that it should be enjoyed in common. And indeed, abstracting from all considerations of justice, the experience of the precarious fortune of the chase would soon suggest to the common sense of mankind the expediency of such an arrangement. This, however, does not indicate any imperfection in their idea of property; for even in this state of society there are always some articles which are understood to be the exclusive property of the individual, such as his bow and arrows, and the instruments he employs in fishing.

I am confirmed in these conclusions by the account given by Dr. Robertson of the American Indians; and the more so, as the facts he mentions, and even his reasonings, stand in opposition to his own preconceived opinion. "*Nations*," he says expressly, "*which depend upon hunting, are strangers to the idea of property;*" and yet, when he comes to explain himself, it appears that even in the present age of metaphysical refinement, if our physical circumstances were the same, we should feel and judge exactly as they do. "As the animals," he continues in the passage immediately following the last sentence I quoted, "on which the hunter feeds, are not bred under his inspection, nor nourished by his care, he can claim no right to them while they run wild in the forest. Where game is so plentiful that it can be catched with little trouble, men never dream of appropriating what is of small value, or of easy acquisition. Where it is so rare that the labor or danger of the chase requires the united efforts of a tribe or village, what is killed is a common stock belonging equally to all, who, by their skill or their courage, have contributed to the success of the excursion. The forest or hunting grounds are deemed the property of the tribe, from which it has a title to exclude every rival nation. But no individual arrogates a right to any district of these in preference to

his fellow citizens. They belong equally to all, and thither, as to a general and undivided store, all repair in quest of sustenance. The same principles by which they regulate their chief occupation extend to that which is subordinate. Even agriculture has not introduced among them a complete idea of property. As the men hunt, the women labor together, and after they have shared the toils of the seed time, they enjoy the harvest in common." *

In the notes and illustrations at the end of the history, Dr. Robertson seems to have been aware that he had expressed himself somewhat too strongly on this subject, and he has even gone so far as to intimate his suspicions that the common facts are not very accurately stated. "I strongly suspect that a community of goods and an undivided store are known only among the rudest tribes of hunters, and that, as soon as any species of agriculture or regular industry is known, the idea of an exclusive right of property to the fruits of them is introduced."

In support of this opinion, Dr. Robertson refers to accounts which he had received concerning the state of property among the Indians in very different regions of America. "The idea of the natives of Brazil," says the Chevalier de Pinto, who writes on this subject from personal observation, "concerning property, is, that, if any person cultivate a field, he alone ought to enjoy the produce of it, and no other has a title to pretend to it. If an individual or a family go a hunting or fishing, what is caught belongs to the individual or family, and they communicate no part of it but to their Cazique, and such of their kindred as happen to be indisposed.

"If any person in the village come to their hut, he may sit down freely and eat without asking liberty. But this is the consequence of their general principle of hospitality, for I never observed any partition of the increase of their fields, or the produce of the chase, which I could consider as the result of any idea concerning the community of goods. On the contrary, they are so

* History of America, Book iv.

much attached to what they deem to be their property, that it would be extremely dangerous to encroach on it. As far as I have seen or can learn, there is not one tribe of Indians in South America among whom that community of goods, which has been so highly extolled, is known. The circumstance in the government of the Jesuits most irksome to the Indians of Paraguay was the community of goods which those fathers introduced. This was repugnant to the original ideas of the Indians. They were acquainted with the rights of private exclusive property, and they submitted with impatience to the regulations which destroyed them.*

"Actual possession," says a missionary who resided several years among the Indians of the Five Nations, "gives a right to the soil, but, whenever a possessor sees fit to quit it, another has as good a right to take it as he who left it. This law or custom respects not only the particular spot on which he erects his house, but also his planting ground. If a man has prepared a particular spot of ground, on which he proposes in future to build or plant, no man has a right to incommode him, much less to the fruit of his labors, until it appears that he voluntarily gives up his views. But I never heard of any formal conveyance from one Indian to another in their natural state. The limit of every canton is circumscribed, that is, they are allowed to hunt as far as such a river on this hand, and such a mountain on the other. This area is occupied and improved by individuals and their families. Individuals, not the community, have the use and profit of their own labors, or success in hunting."†

In a passage quoted on a former occasion from Crantz, a remarkable instance is given of a sacred and even superstitious regard to property among the Greenlanders. "Not one of these people," says he, "will appropriate to himself a sea dog in which he finds one or more harpoons with untorn thongs, nor even carry away drift wood, or other things thrown up by the sea,

* M. le Chev. de Pinto, MS., *penes* Dr. Robertson.
† MS. of Mr. Gideon Kawley, *penes* Dr. Robertson.

if they are covered with a stone, because they consider this as an indication that they have been already appropriated by some other person." This is the more singular as they are described by the same very authentic writer, as carrying their pacific and unresisting disposition to an extraordinary length, when their own rights are invaded by strangers. "They will rather," he tells us, "quit a territory than expel those who come and fish within the dams which they have raised with great labor." He justly, however, ascribes this to the passiveness and cowardice of their tempers, and not to a defect in their idea of property, or to an unconsciousness of the injury they have received. The contrary, indeed, may be safely inferred from the singular integrity by which they are distinguished in their own transactions.

I formerly said, that, according to the *Law of Nature*, labor not only founds an exclusive right of property in those objects to which it has communicated their utility, but that it is the *sole* method by which an object *can* be appropriated by an individual, independently of conventional ideas and institutions; and that, wherever a priority of occupancy is understood to establish a right beyond the period of actual possession, it derives this effect entirely from regulations (either tacitly or formally recognised among the parties concerned) which have been gradually suggested, in the progress of human reason, by considerations of convenience or of expediency. It must not, however, be inferred from this, that in a civilized society there is any thing in that species of property which is acquired by labor to which individuals owe a more sacred regard, than they do to every other species of property created or recognised by positive laws. Among these last there are *many* which have derived their origin from a principle no less obligatory than our natural sense of *justice;* a clear perception in the mind of the legislator (sanctioned perhaps by the concurrent experience of different ages and nations) of *general utility;* and to *all* of them, while they exist, the reverence of the subject is due on the same principle which binds him to respect and to main-

tain the social order. Nature has provided for human happiness, in this instance, in a manner precisely analogous to her general economy. Those simple and indispensable rules of *right* and *wrong*, of *just* and *unjust*, without which the fruits of the earth could not be converted to the use of man, nor his existence maintained even in the rudest form of the social union, she has engraved on the heart as an essential part of the human constitution,—leaving men, as society advances, to employ their gradually improving *reason* in fixing, according to their own ideas of expediency, the various regulations concerning the acquisition, the alienation, and transmission of property, which the more complicated interests of the community may require.

It is also beautifully ordered, that, while a regard for legal property is thus secured, among men capable of reflection, by a sense of general utility, the same effect is accomplished, in the minds of the multitude, *by habit and the association of ideas;* in consequence of which all the inequalities of fortune are sanctioned by mere prescription; and long possession is conceived to found a *right of property* as complete as what, by the law of nature, an individual has in the fruits of his own industry.

In such a state of things, therefore, as that with which we are connected, the right of property must be understood to derive its origin from *two* distinct sources; the one is, that natural sentiment of the mind which establishes a moral connexion between labor and an exclusive enjoyment of the fruits of it; the other is the municipal institutions of the country where we live. These institutions every where take rise partly from ideas of natural justice, and partly (perhaps chiefly) from ideas of supposed utility,—two principles which, when properly understood, are I believe always in harmony with each other, and which it ought to be the great aim of every legislator to reconcile to the utmost of his power. Among those questions, however, which fall under the cognizance of positive laws, there are many on which natural justice is entirely silent, and which, of consequence, may be discussed on principles of *utility* solely.

Such are most of the questions concerning the regulation of the succession to a man's property after his death; of some of which it may perhaps be found that the determination ought to vary with the circumstances of the society, and which have certainly, *in fact*, been frequently determined by the caprice of the legislator, or by some principle ultimately resolvable into an accidental association of ideas. Indeed, various cases may be supposed in which it is not only useful but necessary that a rule should be fixed; while, at the same time, *neither* justice nor utility seem to be much interested in the particular decision.

In examining the questions which turn on considerations of *utility*, some will immediately occur of which the determination is so obvious, and at the same time so universal in their application, that the laws of all enlightened nations on the subject may be expected to be the same. Of this description are many of the questions which may be stated with respect to the effects of *priority of occupancy* in establishing *permanent* rights. These questions are of course frequently confounded with questions of *natural law;* and in *one* sense of that phrase they may not improperly be comprehended under the title, but the distinction between them and the other class of questions is essential; for wherever considerations of utility are involved, the political union is supposed; whereas the principles of *justice*, properly so called, (of that justice, for example, which respects the right of the laborer to enjoy the fruit of his own industry) is inseparable from the human frame. It is necessary (as I already said) to maintain the social union even in its simplest form; and in its most improved state it operates as a principle of morality to guard the rights of individuals, and to maintain the order of society, in numberless instances to which the laws of the magistrate cannot extend.

I have insisted the longer on this distinction, because, obvious as it may appear, it has been seldom attended to by writers on jurisprudence. Confining their views to the state of their *own* ideas and feelings, as modified *by* artificial habits, they have neglected to draw the line

between the *right of property as recognised by the law of nature*, and the *right of property as created by municipal regulations*. In their speculations, accordingly, on this subject, they have searched for *one general principle* into which all the different phenomena might be resolved; and in this manner, while they have perverted the history of mankind in the early stages of society, they have weakened the foundations on which property rests when considered as a part of the political system.

CHAPTER THIRD.

OF VERACITY.

THE important rank which Veracity holds among our social duties appears from the obvious consequences that would result if no foundation were laid for it in the constitution of our nature. The purposes of speech would be frustrated, and every man's opportunities of knowledge would be limited to his own personal experience.

Considerations of utility, however, do not seem to be the only ground of the approbation we bestow on this disposition. Abstracting from all regard to consequences, there is something pleasing and amiable in sincerity, openness, and truth; something disagreeable and disgusting in duplicity, equivocation, and falsehood. Dr. Hutcheson himself, the great patron of that theory which resolves all moral qualities into benevolence, confesses this; for he speaks of a *sense* which leads us to approve of veracity, distinct from the *sense* which approves of qualities useful to mankind. "Facultatis hujus, sive orationis, comes est et moderator *sensus* quidam subtilior, ex veri etiam cognoscendi appetitione naturali non parum confirmatus, quo vera omnia, simplicia, fidelia comprobamus; falsa, ficta, fallacia odimus." *—"*Sensu* enim cujusque *proxime* commendatur is sermonis usus, quem communis exigit utilitas. Hoc vero stabile consilium eo tantum utendi sermone, qui cum animi sententiâ congruit, quique alios non decipit, comprobant et animi sensus *per se*, et utilitatis communis ratio." † As this, however, is at best but a vague way of speaking, it may be proper to analyze more particularly that part of our constitution from which our approbation of veracity arises.

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* Philosophiæ Moralis Institutio compendiaria, Lib. ii. cap. 9.

† Ibid. Lib. ii. cap. 10.

Aristotle expresses himself nearly to the same purpose. Καὶ αὐτὸ μὲν ψεῦδος φαῦλον καὶ ψεύστης, τὸ δὲ ἀληθὲς καλὸν καὶ ἐπαινετόν.—Aritsot. Ethic. Nicomach. Lib. iv. cap. 7. Various passages of a similar import occur in Cicero.

That there is in the human mind a natural or instinctive principle of veracity, has been remarked by many authors; the same part of our constitution which prompts to social intercourse, prompting also to sincerity in our mutual communications. Truth is always the spontaneous and native expression of our sentiments; whereas falsehood implies a certain violence done to our nature, in consequence of the influence of some motive which we are anxious to conceal.

With respect to the nature of TRUTH various metaphysical speculations have been offered to the world, and various definitions have been attempted, both by the ancients and moderns. These, however, have thrown but little light on the subject, which is not surprising when we consider that the word *truth* expresses a simple idea or notion, of which no analysis or explication is possible. The same observation may be made with respect to the words *knowledge* and *belief*. All of them express notions which are implied in every judgment of the understanding, and which no being can form who is not possessed of a rational nature. And, by the way, these notions deserve to be added to the list formerly mentioned, as exemplifications of the imperfection of the account commonly given of the origin of our ideas. They are obviously not derived from any particular sense; and they do not seem to be referable to any part of our constitution, but to the *understanding*; or, in other words, to those rational powers which distinguish man from the brutes. This language, I know will appear to be very loose and inaccurate to those who have familiarized their minds to the common doctrine; but it is a plain and indisputable statement of the fact.

To acquire knowledge or to discover truth, is the proper object of *curiosity*; a principle of action which is coëval with the first operations of the intellect, and which in most minds continues through life to have a powerful influence in one way or another on the character and the conduct. It is this principle which puts the intellectual faculties in motion, and gives them that exercise which is necessary for their developement and improvement; and which, according to the direction it

takes, and the particular set of faculties it exercises, is the principal foundation of the *diversities* of genius among men. And as the *diversities* of genius proceed from the different directions in which curiosity engages the attention, so the *inequalities* of genius among individuals may be traced in a great measure to the different degrees of ardor and perseverance with which the curiosity operates. When I say this, I would not be understood to insinuate, that the different capacities of individuals are the same; a supposition contradicted by obvious facts, and contrary to what we should be led to conclude from the analogy of the body. I only wish to impress on all those who have any connexion with the education of youth, the great importance of stimulating the curiosity, and of directing it to proper objects, as the most effectual of all means for securing the improvement of the mind: I may add, as one of the most effectual provisions that can be made for the happiness of the individual, in consequence of the resources it furnishes when we are left to depend on ourselves for enjoyment; and in consequence also of the progressive vigor with which it operates to the very close of life, in proportion to the enlargement of our experience and the extent of our information.

In order however to prevent misapprehensions of my meaning, it is necessary for me again to remark, that the curiosity on which I lay so great a stress is that curiosity alone which has *truth* for its object. "There are many men," says Butler, "who have a strong curiosity to know what is *said* who have no curiosity to know what is *true;*"—men who value knowledge only as furnishing an employment to their memory, or as supplying a gratification to their vanity in their intercourse with others. It is a weakness which we may presume has prevailed more or less in all ages; but which has been much encouraged in modern Europe, by that superstitious admiration of antiquity which has withdrawn so much genius and industry from the pursuits of science to those of erudition. No prejudice can be conceived more adverse to the progress of useful knowledge, not only as it occasions an idle waste of time and labor which might

have been more profitably employed, but as it contributes powerfully to destroy that simplicity and modesty of temper which are the genuine characteristics of the true philosopher.

I think it of importance to add, that the love of truth, where it is the great motive of our intellectual pursuits, gains daily an accession of strength as our knowledge advances. I already said that it is an ultimate fact in our nature, and is not resolvable into views of utility. Its extensive effects on human happiness are discovered only in the progress of our experience; but when this discovery is once made, it superadds to our instinctive curiosity every stimulus which self-love and benevolence can furnish. The connexion between error and misery, between truth and happiness, becomes gradually more apparent as our inquiries proceed, and produces at last a complete conviction that, even in those cases where we are unable to trace it, the connexion subsists. He who feels this as he ought, will consider a steadfast adherence to the truth as an expression of benevolence to man, and of confidence in the righteous administration of the universe, and will suspect the purity of those motives, which would lead him to advance the good of his species or the glory of his Maker, by deceit and hypocrisy.

In offering these remarks I shall no doubt be thought to have taken a very wide circuit in order to illustrate the nature of that veracity which is incumbent on us in our intercourse with our fellow creatures. But it appears to me the most solid of all foundations for the uniform and the scrupulous exercise of this virtue is, to cherish the love of truth in general, and to impress the mind with a conviction of its important effects on our own happiness and on that of society. There is indeed a sort of gross and ostensible practice of this duty which is secured by what we call the *point of honor* in modern Europe, which brands with infamy every palpable deviation from the truth in matters of *fact*. The law of honor here operates in the case of veracity, in some measure as the law of the magistrate operates in the case of justice. But, as in the latter case, a man

may be unjust in the sight of God and of his own conscience, without transgressing the letter of any statute, so in the former, without forfeiting his character as a gentleman, he may often incur all the guilt of a liar and an impostor. Is it, in a moral view, more criminal to misrepresent a fact, than to impose on the world by what we know to be an unsound or a fallacious argument? Is it, in a moral view, more criminal to mislead another by a *verbal* lie, than by actions which convey a false idea of our intentions? Is it, in a moral view, more criminal, or is it more inconsistent with the dignity of a man of true honor, to defraud men in a private transaction by an incorrect or erroneous statement of circumstances, than to mislead the public to their own ruin by those wilful deviations from truth, into which we see men daily led by views of interest or ambition, or by the spirit of political faction? Numberless cases, in short, may be fancied, in which our only security for truth is the virtuous disposition of the individual, and where the restraint of public opinion has little or no influence. Perhaps I should not go too far were I to affirm, that, as there is no duty of which the gross and ostensible practice is so effectually secured by the manners of modern times, so there is none of the obligation of which mankind seem in general to be so insensible, considered as moral agents, and accountable to God for their thoughts and intentions.

Among the various causes which have conspired to relax our moral principles on this important article, the facility which the press affords us in modern times of addressing the world by means of annonymous publications, is probably one of the most powerful. The salutary restraint which a regard to character imposes, in most cases, on our moral deviations, is here withdrawn; and we have no security for the fidelity of the writer, but his disinterested love of truth and of mankind. The palpable and ludicrous misrepresentations of facts, to which we are accustomed from our infancy in the periodical prints of the day, gradually unhinge our faith in all such communications; and what we are every day accustomed to see, we cease in time to regard with

due abhorrence. Nor is this the only moral evil resulting from the licentiousness of the press. The intentions of nature in appointing public esteem as the reward of virtue, and infamy as the punishment of vice, are in a great measure thwarted; and while the fairest characters are left open to the assaults of a calumny which it is impossible to trace to its author, the opinions of the public may be so divided by the artifices of hireling flatterers, with respect to men of the most profligate and abandoned lives, as to enable them not only to brave the censures of the world, but to retaliate with more than an equal advantage on the good name of those who have the rashness to accuse them.

In a free government like ours the liberty of the press has been often and justly called the Palladium of the Constitution; but it may reasonably be doubted whether this liberty would be at all impaired by a regulation, which, while it left the press perfectly open to every man who was willing openly to avow his opinions, rendered it impossible for any individual to publish a sentence without the sanction of his name. Upon this question, however, considered in a *political* point of view, I shall not presume to decide. Considered in a *moral* light, the advantages of such a regulation appear to be obvious and indisputable, and the *effect* could scarcely fail to have a most extensive influence on national manners.

Under this article of veracity in testimony might be considered a great variety of those abuses of speech which occur daily in ordinary conversation. But the consideration of these would lead me into details too minute for my general plan. And I quit the subject with the less reluctance, as it has been so ably discussed by Dr. Butler in his excellent *Discourse on the Government of the Tongue.*

Besides that love of truth which seems evidently to be an original principle of the mind, there are other laws of our nature which were plainly intended to secure the practice of veracity in our intercourse with our fellow creatures. There are others, too, which, as they suppose the practice of this virtue, may be regarded as in-

timations of that conduct which is conformable to the end and destination of our being. Such is that disposition to repose faith in testimony, which is coëval with the use of language. Without such a disposition the education of children would be impracticable; and accordingly, so far from being the result of experience, it seems to be, in the first instance, unlimited; nature intrusting its gradual correction to the progress of reason and of observation. This remark, which I think was first made by Dr. Reid, has been since repeated and enforced by Mr. Smith in the last edition of his Theory of Moral Sentiments.* This author observes further, that, "notwithstanding the lessons of caution communicated to us by experience, there is scarcely a man to be found who is not more credulous than he ought to be, and who does not, upon many occasions, give credit to tales which not only turn out to be perfectly false, but which a very moderate degree of reflection and attention might have taught him could not well be true. The natural disposition is always to believe. It is acquired wisdom and experience alone that teach incredulity, and they very seldom teach it enough. The wisest and most cautious of us all frequently gives credit to stories which he himself is afterwards both ashamed and astonished that he could possibly think of believing." This disposition to repose faith in testimony bears a striking analogy, both in its origin and in its final cause, to our instinctive expectation of the continuance of those laws which regulate the course of physical events.

In infancy the principle of veracity is by no means so conspicuous as that of credulity, and it sometimes happens that a good deal of care is necessary to cherish it. But in such cases it will always be found that there is some indirect motive combined with the desire of social communication, such as fear, or vanity, or mischief, or sensuality. The same principle which prompts to social intercourse and to the use of speech, prompts also to veracity. Nor is it probable that there is such a thing as falsehood uttered merely from the love of falsehood.

* See Vol. ii. p. 382.

If this remark be just, it suggests an important practical rule in the business of education:—Not to attempt the cure of lying and deceit by general rules concerning the duty of veracity, or by punishments inflicted upon every single violation of it, but by studying to discover and remove the radical evil from which it springs, whether it be cowardice, or vanity, or mischief, or selfishness, or sensuality. Either of these, if allowed to operate, will in time unhinge the natural constitution of the mind, and produce a disregard to truth upon all occasions where a temporary convenience can be gained by the breach of it.

From these imperfect hints, it would appear that every breach of veracity indicates some latent vice or some criminal intention, which an individual is ashamed to avow. And hence the peculiar beauty of openness or sincerity, uniting in some degree in itself the graces of all the other moral qualities of which it attests the existence.

Fidelity to promises, which is commonly regarded as a branch of veracity, is perhaps more properly a branch of justice; but this is merely a question of arrangement, and of little consequence to our present purpose. If a person gives his promise, intending to perform, but fails in the execution, his fault is strictly speaking a breach of justice. As there is a natural faith in testimony, so there is a natural expectation excited by a promise. When I exite this expectation, and lead other men to act accordingly, I convey a right to the performance of my promise, and I act unjustly if I fail in performing it.

If a person promises, not intending to perform, he is guilty of a complication of injustice and falsehood; for although a declaration of present intention does not amount to a promise, every promise involves a declaration of present intention.

These observations may suffice with respect to the duties which have our fellow creatures for their objects. I have by no means attempted a complete enumeration,

which would have unavoidably engaged me in an illustration of the hackneyed topics of practical morality. What I had chiefly in view was to show, that, even among those duties which have a reference to mankind, there are several which cannot be resolved into that of benevolence.

The duties which I have mentioned are all independent of any particular relation between us and other men. But there are a great variety of other duties resulting from such relations; the duties (for example) of Friendship and of Patriotism, besides those relative duties which moralists have distinguished by the titles of Economical and Political. To attempt an enumeration of these, would lead into the details of practical Ethics.

CHAPTER FOURTH.

OF THE DUTIES WHICH RESPECT OURSELVES.

General Remarks on this Class of our Duties.

PRUDENCE, temperance, and fortitude, are no less requisite for enabling us to discharge our social duties, than for securing our own private happiness: * But as they do not necessarily imply any reference to our fellow creatures, they seem to belong most properly to this third branch of virtue.

An illustration of the nature and tendency of these qualities, and of the means by which they are to be improved and confirmed, although a most important article of ethics, does not lead to any discussions of so abstract a kind, as to require particular attention in a work of which brevity is a principal object. It is sufficient here to remark, that, independently of all considerations of utility, either to ourselves or to others, these qualities are approved of as right and becoming. Their utility, at the same time, or rather necessity, for securing the discharge of our other duties, adds greatly to the respect they command, and is certainly the chief ground of the obligation we lie under, to cultivate the habits by which they are formed.

A steady regard, in the conduct of life, to the happiness and perfection of our own nature, and a diligent study of the means by which these ends may be attained, is another duty belonging to this branch of virtue. It is a duty so important and comprehensive, that it leads to the practice of all the rest, and is therefore entitled to a very full and particular examination in a system of Moral Philosophy. Such an examination, while it leads

* "He who is qualified to promote the welfare of mankind," says Dr. Ferguson, "is neither a sot, a fool, nor a coward."—*Essay on the History of Civil Society*, Part i. Sect. vi.

our thoughts "to the end and aim of our being," will again bring under our review the various duties already considered; and by showing how they all conspire in recommending the same dispositions, will illustrate the unity of design in the human constitution, and the benevolent wisdom displayed in its formation. Other subordinate duties, besides, which it would be tedious to enumerate under separate titles, may thus be placed in a light more interesting and agreeable.

SECTION I.

Of the Duty of employing the Means we possess to secure our own Happiness.

According to Dr. Hutcheson, our conduct, so far as it is influenced by self-love, is never the object of moral approbation. Even a regard to the pleasures of a good conscience he considered as detracting from the merit of those actions which it encourages us to perform.

That the principle of self-love (or, in other words, the desire of happiness) is neither an object of approbation nor of blame, is sufficiently obvious. It is inseparable from the nature of man as a rational and a sensitive being. It is, however, no less obvious, on the other hand, that this desire, considered as a principle of action, has by no means an uniform influence on the conduct. Our animal appetites, our affections, and the other inferior principles of our nature, interfere as often with self-love as with benevolence, and mislead us from our own happiness as much as from the duties we owe to others.

In these cases every spectator pronounces, that we *deserve* to suffer for our folly and indiscretion; and we ourselves, as soon as the tumult of passion is over, feel in the same manner. Nor is this remorse merely a sentiment of regret for having missed that happiness which we might have enjoyed. We are dissatisfied, not only with our condition, but with our conduct;—with our having forfeited by our own imprudence what we might have attained.*

* See Butler's Dissertation on the Nature of Virtue.

It is true that we do not feel so warm an indignation against the neglect of private good, as against perfidy, cruelty, and injustice. The reason probably is, that imprudence commonly carries its own punishment along with it; and our resentment is disarmed by pity. Indeed, as that habitual regard to his own happiness, which every man feels, except when under the influence of some violent appetite, is a powerful check on imprudence, it was less necessary to provide an additional punishment for this vice in the indignation of the world.

From the principles now stated, it follows, that, in a person who believes in a future state, the criminality of every bad action is aggravated by the imprudence with which it is accompanied.

It follows, also, that the punishments annexed by the civil magistrate to particular actions render the commission of them more criminal than it would otherwise be; insomuch, that if an action, in itself perfectly indifferent, were prohibited by some arbitrary law, under a severe penalty, the commission of that action (unless we were called to it by some urgent consideration of duty) would be criminal, not merely on account of the obedience which a subject owes to established authority, but on account of the regard which every man ought to feel for his life and reputation. To forge the hand-writing of another with a fraudulent intention is undoubtedly a crime, independently of positive institutions; and it becomes still more criminal in a commercial country like ours, on account of the extensive mischiefs which may arise from it. It is a crime, however, not of greater magnitude than many other kinds of commercial fraud that might be mentioned. If the King, for example, grants his patent to a subject for a particular invention, and another counterfeits it, and makes use of his name, stamp, and coat of arms, he not only injures an individual, but imposes on the public. Abstracting, therefore, from positive law, the criminality of the latter act is fully as great as that of the former. As the law, however, has made the one act capital, and the other not, but only subjected the person who commits it to pecuniary damages to the individual he has injured, the forgery of a

deed becomes incomparably more criminal in a moral view than the counterfeit of a patent invention. A good man, indeed, will neither do the one nor the other. But the man who adds to a fraudulent disposition an imprudent disregard to his own life and character, is undoubtedly the more guilty of the two, and meets his fate with much less sympathy from others than he would receive, if he had committed the same act without knowing its consequences.

SECTION II.

Of Happiness. Systems of the Grecian Schools on the Subject.

THE most superficial observation of life is sufficient to convince us, that Happiness is not to be attained by giving every appetite and desire the gratification they demand; and that it is necessary for us to form to ourselves some plan or system of conduct, in subordination to which all other objects are to be pursued.

To ascertain what this system ought to be, is a problem which has in all ages employed the speculations of philosophers. Among the ancients the question concerning the SOVEREIGN GOOD was the principal subject of controversy which divided the schools; and it was treated in such a manner, as to involve almost every other question of ethics. The opinions maintained with respect to it by some of their sects, comprehend many of the most important truths to which the inquiry leads, and leave little to be added, but a few corrections and limitations of their conclusions.

These opinions may be all reduced to *three;* those of the Epicureans, of the Stoics, and of the Peripatetics: And, indeed, it does not seem possible to form a conception of any scheme of happiness which may not be referred to one or other of these three systems.

I.

The fundamental principle of the Epicurean system was, that bodily pleasure and pain were the sole ulti-

mate objects of desire and aversion. These were desired and shunned on their own account; every thing else from its tendency to procure the one of these or to save us from the other. *Power*, (for example) *riches*, *reputation*, even the *virtues* themselves, were not desirable for their own sake, but were valuable merely as being instrumental to procure us the objects of our natural desires. "They who place the *sovereign good* in *virtue* alone, and who, dazzled by words, overlook the intentions of nature, will be delivered from this greatest of all errors if they will only listen to Epicurus. As to these rare and excellent qualities on which you set so high a value, who is there that would consider them as objects either of praise or of imitation, unless from a belief that they are instrumental in adding to the sum of our pleasures? For as we prize the medical art, not on its own account, but as subservient to the preservation of health, and the art of the pilot, not for the skill he displays, but as it diminishes the dangers of navigation, so also *wisdom*, which is the art of living, would be coveted by none if it were altogether unprofitable; whereas, now, it is an object of general pursuit, from a persuasion that it both guides us to our best enjoyments, and points out to us the most effectual means for their attainment." *

In the passage which immediately follows this quotation, Cicero proceeds to state particularly the reasonings of Epicurus concerning the different *virtues*, which he has done not only in a manner extremely pleasing and interesting, but completely satisfactory. Indeed I do not know of any thing more valuable that the ancients have left us than these philosophical works of Cicero, considered as authentic records of the ethical disquisitions of the Grecian schools.†

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* "Qui summum bonum in unâ virtute ponunt, et splendore nominis capti, quid natura postulet, non intelligunt, errore maximo, si Epicurum audire voluerint, liberabuntur. Istæ enim vestræ eximiæ pulchræque virtutes, nisi voluptatem efficerent, quis eas aut laudabiles aut expetendas arbitraretur? Ut enim medicorum scientiam, non ipsius artis, sed bonæ valetudinis causâ, probamus; et gubernatoris ars, quia bene navigandi rationem habet, utilitate non arte laudatur; sic sapientia, quæ ars vivendi putanda est, non expeteretur, si nihil efficeret; nunc expetitur, quod est tanquam artifex conquirendæ et comparandæ voluptatis."—(*Cicero De Fin.* i. 13.)

† The Philosophical Works of Cicero were so highly valued by Mr. Smith, that,

All the pleasures and pains of the *mind* (according to Epicurus) are derived from the recollection and anticipation of *bodily* pleasures and pains; but this recollection and anticipation he considered as contributing much more to our happiness or misery on the whole, than the pleasures and pains themselves. His philosophy was indeed directed chiefly to inculcate this truth, and to withdraw our solicitude from the pleasures and pains themselves which are not in our power, to the regulation of our recollections and anticipations, which depend upon ourselves. He placed happiness, therefore, in ease of body and tranquillity of mind, but much more in the latter than in the former, insomuch that he affirmed a wise man might be happy in the midst of bodily torments. "Hear," says Cicero, "the language of Epicurus on his death-bed. 'Epicurus to Hermachus, greeting. While I am passing the last day of my life, and *that* the happiest, I write this epistle, oppressed at the same time with so many and such acute maladies, that it is scarcely possible to conceive that my sufferings are susceptible of augmentation. All these, however, are amply compensated by the mental joy I derive from the recollection of the reasonings and discoveries of which I am the author.'" * The concluding sentence of the letter does more honor to Epicurus than any other part of it. "'But *you*, as is worthy of your good will towards me and philosophy, let it be your business to consider yourself as the guardian and protector of the children of Metrodorus.'" †

It is unnecessary for me to enter into a particular examination of these doctrines, which have been obvious-

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when he was Professor of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow, he made the Books De Finibus the subject of a separate course of lectures, which he gave annually to his students. Of these lectures (in delivering which he trusted entirely to extempore elocution) I have heard some of his pupils, who were very competent to judge, speak with enthusiastic admiration; among others Mr. Millar, Professor of Law, Lord Cullen, and Lord Craig.

* "Audi moriens quid dicat Epicurus.—'Epicurus Hermacho S.—Cum ageremus (inquit) vitæ beatum et cundem supremum diem, scribebamus hæc. Tanti autem morbi aderant vesicæ et viscerum, ut nihil ad eorum magnitudinem possit accedere. Compensabatur tamen cum his omnibus animi lætitia, quam capiebam memoriâ rationum inventorumque nostrorum.'"—(*De Fin.* ii. 30.)

† "'Sed tu ut dignum est tuâ erga me et erga philosophiam voluntate ab adolescentulo susceptâ, fac ut Metrodori tueare liberos.'"—(Ibid.) The same letter is to be found in Diogenes Laërtius, Lib. x.

ly suggested by that excessive love of simplicity in the explanation of appearances which has given rise to so many erroneous theories both in physics and morals. The system of Epicurus, however, (although it places morality on a wrong foundation, and employs a language with respect to happiness very liable to abuse,—a language which, as Cicero remarks, "savours of nothing magnificent, nothing generous" †) bears at least very honorable testimony to the tendency of the virtues to promote happiness even in *this* life, since he imagined it was from *this* tendency they derive all their value. And accordingly, Mr. Smith remarks, that "Cicero, the great enemy of the Epicurean system, borrows from it his most agreeable proofs, that virtue alone is sufficient to secure happiness. And Seneca, though a Stoic, the sect most opposite to that of Epicurus, yet quotes this philosopher more frequently than any other."

Epicurus himself is represented as a person of inoffensive and even amiable manners. He is said to have taught his philosophy in a garden, where he lived a temperate and quiet life, enjoying what Thompson calls "the glad poetic ease of Epicurus,—seldom understood." He died at an advanced age, and was so much beloved and esteemed by his followers that his birth-day was annually celebrated as a festival. His private virtues, however, were probably in a great measure the effect of a happy natural constitution; for his philosophy, besides destroying all those supports of morality that religion affords, tended avowedly to recommend a life of indolent and selfish indulgence, and a total abstraction from the concerns and duties of the world. Accordingly we find that many of his disciples brought so much discredit on their principles, by the dissoluteness of their lives, that the word *Epicurean* came gradually to be understood as characteristical of a person devoted to sensual gratifications. It is worthy of remark, too, that it was from the speculative opinions of this sect that the looseness of their moral principles arose; or rather, the former were inculcated with a view to the justification of the latter. Such was the reasoning of

† "Nihil magnificum, nihil generosum sapit."

Trimalchio, (in Petronius) who, when a servant had brought into the banquet a silver skeleton and set it on the table, exclaimed,

> "Heu, heu nos miseros! quam totus homuncio nil est!
> Sic erimus cuncti, postquam nos auferet Orcus;
> Ergo vivamus, dum licet esse, bene."

The same sentiment is well expressed by Cowley in an imitation of Anacreon.

> "Crown me with roses whilst I live,
> *Now* your wines and ointments give:
> *After* death I nothing crave;
> All are Stoics in the grave."

The influence which these principles had on the manners of the later Romans has been remarked by many writers; and it is not a little curious that it was clearly foreseen ages before by their virtuous and enlightened progenitors. This fact, which has not been sufficiently attended to, deserves the serious consideration of those who are disposed to call in question the effect of speculative opinions on national character. I shall make no apology, therefore, for entering into some slight details upon the subject.

It was in the year of Rome 471, and during the consulate of Fabricius, that the Romans seem to have received the first notice of the Epicurean doctrines. At that period the Tarentines had the address to instigate the Samnites and almost all the other Italian states to take arms against the republic, and also prevailed on Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, to give them his assistance. In the course of the war, Fabricius, with two other persons of high rank, was sent to Pyrrhus's court, to treat with him about an exchange of prisoners; and it was at a public entertainment given to them upon that occasion that Cineas, his minister and favorite, gave the Roman ambassadors a general idea of the philosophical principles which Epicurus had begun to teach at Athens about twenty years before.

The effect which this conversation had on the minds of the Roman ambassadors is an instructive fact in the history of philosophy. We are often desirous to know *how* a particular opinion would strike a man of plain

understanding the first time it was proposed to him. It is an experiment, however, that we have but seldom an apportunity of making, as it is impossible to make the vulgar comprehend the terms of a speculative controversy, and as the judgments of the learned are commonly in some degree warped by education. An opinion, however absurd, that we have been accustomed to hear from infancy, and with which we connect the names of men eminent for genius and knowledge, even although we should reject it as erroneous, may still have some influence in unsettling our notions, and certainly will not appear to us so palpably ridiculous as it would do to a person to whom it is altogether new. The rage of disputation which prevailed in Greece seems in this way to have hurt the understandings of some of their best philosophers; and the case is but too similar with many in modern Europe. It is curious, therefore, to consider the light in which the philosophy of Epicurus appeared to Fabricius and his friends;—men of cultivated minds, and at the same time unperverted by the refinements of sophistry, and perfectly acquainted, both from their own experience and the observation of their countrymen, with those practical principles which are favorable to active and heroic virtue. With respect to this point Cicero has enabled us to form a judgment from the following anecdote which he has recorded in his Treatise on Old Age.

"I have frequently heard from some of my friends, who were much my seniors," says Cato to Scipio and Lælius, "a traditionary anecdote concerning Fabricius. They assured me, that, in the early part of their life, they were told by certain very old men of their acquaintance, that when Fabricius was ambassador at the court of Pyrrhus he expressed great astonishment at the account given him by Cineas of a philosopher at Athens, who maintained that the love of pleasure was universally the leading motive of all human actions. My informer added, that, when Fabricius related this fact to M. Curius and Titus Coruncanius, they both joined in wishing that Pyrrhus and the whole Samnite nation might become converts to this extraordinary doctrine, as

the people who were infected with such unmanly principles could not fail, they thought, of proving an easy conquest to their enemies. M. Curius had been intimately connected with Publius Decius, who, in his fourth consulate (which was five years before the former entered upon that office,) gloriously sacrificed his life to the preservation of his country. This generous patriot was personally known both to Fabricius and to Coruncanius; and they were convinced, by what they experienced in their own breasts, as well as by the illustrious example of Decius, that there is in certain actions an intrinsic rectitude and obligation which, with a noble contempt of what the world calls *pleasure*, every great and generous mind, will steadily keep in view, as a sacred rule of conduct, and as the chief concern of life." *

To this anecdote it may not be improper to add another which occurs in a later period of the Roman history. In the year of Rome 599, the Athenians sent to that city a deputation of three of their principal philosophers, at the head of whom was Carneades, a celebrated patron of the academical sect. While the ambassadors were waiting for their answer, Carneades amused himself in displaying his ingenuity and eloquence to the Roman youth, by endeavouring to prove that justice and injustice derived their origin from positive institutions, and that there was no foundation for a distinction between them in the nature of man. The following day, according the practice of his sect, he took up the opposite side of the question, and attempted to refute his former reasonings. Cato, the censor, was present on both occasions, and was so apprehensive of the consequences of unsettling the opinions of his countrymen on points of so important and sacred a nature, that he never rested till the ambassadors received their final answer, and were dismissed from Rome.†

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* See Melmoth's Translation of Cicero on Old Age.

† Ibid.

The system of morals generally ascribed to Epicurus is said to have been borrowed from Aristippus, who also taught that happiness consisted in bodily pleasure; but it is probable, as Mr. Smith observes, that his manner of applying his principles was altogether his own.—(Theory &c. Vol. ii. p. 268.) Indeed we have the testimony of Diogenes Laërtius that Aristippus taught that happiness consisted in the present pleasures of the body, and not in any mental refinements on these pleasures, accord-

II.

In opposition to the Epicurean doctrines already stated on the subject of happiness, the stoics placed the supreme good in rectitude of conduct, without any regard to the event. They did not, however, as has been often supposed, recommend an indifference to external objects, or a life of inactivity and apathy. On the contrary, they taught that nature pointed out to us certain objects of choice and of rejection, and amongst these some to be *more* chosen and avoided than others; and that virtue consisted in choosing and rejecting objects according to their intrinsic value. They admitted that health was to be preferred to sickness, riches to poverty; the prosperity of our family, of our friends, of our country, to their adversity; and they allowed, nay, they recommended, the most strenuous exertions to accomplish these desirable ends. They only contended these objects should be pursued not as the constituents of our happiness, but because we believe it to be agreeable to nature that we should pursue them; and that, therefore, when we have done our utmost, we should regard the event as indifferent.

That this is a fair representation of the stoical doctrine has been fully proved by Mr. Harris in the very learned and judicious notes on his *Dialogue concerning Happiness;* a performance which, although not entirely free from Mr. Harris's peculiarities of thought and style, does him so much honor, both as a writer and a moralist, that we cannot help regretting, while we peruse it, that he should so often have wasted his ingenuity and learning upon scholastic subtilties, equally inapplicable to the pursuits of science, and to the business of life.

"The word *πάθος*," he observes, "which we usually render *a passion*, means, in the Stoic sense, *a perturbation*, and is always so translated by Cicero; and the

ing to the system of Epicurus.—Laërtius, II. 187. The life of Epicurus has been written in modern times by Gassendi, who attempted to revive his philosophy, and by Bayle. Heineccius also mentions a book entitled, Jacob Rondellus, de Vitâ et de Moribus Epicuri, which has never fallen in my way, (Amst. 1684.)

epithet *ἀπαθὴς*, when applied to the *wise man*, does not mean an exemption from passion, but an exemption from that perturbation which is founded on erroneous opinions. The testimony of Epictetus is express to this purpose. I am not, says he, to be apathetic like a statue, but I am withal to observe relations both the natural and adventitious; as the man of religion, as the son, as the brother, as the father, as the citizen. And immediately before he tells us, That a perturbation in no other way ever arises but either when a desire is frustrated, or an aversion falls into that which it should avoid." "In which passage," says Harris, "it is observable that he does not make either desire, or aversion, *πάθη*, or perturbations, but only the cause of perturbations when erroneously conducted."

From a great variety of passages, which it is unnecessary for me to transcribe, Harris concludes that "the Stoics, in the character of their virtuous man, included rational desire, aversion, and exultation; included love and parental affection, friendship, and a general benevolence to all mankind; and considered it as a duty arising from our very nature not to neglect the welfare of public society, but to be ever ready, according to our rank, to act as either the magistrate or as the private citizen."

Nor did they exclude wealth from among the objects of choice. The Stoic Hecato, in his Treatise of Offices, quoted by Cicero, tells us, "That a wise man, while he abstains from doing any thing contrary to the customs, laws, and institutions of his country, ought to attend to his own fortune. For we do not desire to be rich for ourselves only, but for our children, relations, and friends, and especially for the commonwealth, inasmuch as the riches of individuals are the wealth of a state." *— "Nay," says Cicero, "if the wise man could mend his condition by adding to the amplest possessions the

* "Sapientis esse, nihil contra mores, leges, instituta facientem, habere rationem rei familiaris. Neque enim solum nobis divites esse vulumus, sed liberis, propinquis, amicis, maximeque reipublicæ; singulorum enim facultates et copiæ divitiæ sunt civitatis."—*De Off.* iii. 15.

poorest, meanest utensil, he would in no degree contemn it." *

From these quotations it sufficiently appears that the Stoical system, so far from withdrawing men from the duties of life, was eminently favorable to active virtue. Its peculiar and distinguishing tenet was, that our happiness did not depend on the attainment of the objects of our choice, but on the part that we acted; but this principle was inculcated *not* to damp our exertions, but to lead us to rest our happiness only on circumstances which we ourselves could command. "If I am going to sail," says Epictetus, "I choose the best ship and the best pilot, and I wait for the fairest weather, that my circumstances and duty will allow. Prudence and propriety, the principles which the gods have given me for the direction of my conduct, require this of me, but they require no more; and if, notwithstanding, a storm arises, which neither the strength of the vessel nor the skill of the pilot are likely to withstand, I give myself no trouble about the consequences. All that I had to do is done already. The directors of my conduct never command me to be miserable, to be anxious, desponding, or afraid. Whether we are to be drowned or come to a harbour is the business of Jupiter, not mine. I leave it entirely to his determination, nor ever break my rest with considering which way he is likely to decide it, but receive whatever comes with equal indifference and security." †

We may observe further, in favor of this noble system, that the scale of desirable objects which it exhibited was peculiarly calculated to encourage the social virtues. It represented indeed (in common with the theory of Epicurus) *self-love* as the great spring of human actions; but in the application of this erroneous principle to practice, its doctrines were favorable to the most enlarged, nay, to the most disinterested benevolence. It taught that the prosperity of *two* was preferable to that of *one;* that of a city to that of a family; and that

* "Si ad illam vitam, quæ cum virtute degatur, ampulla aut strigilis accedat, sumpturum sapientem eam vitam potius, cui hæc adjecta sint,"—De Finibus, iv. 12.

† Smith's Translation. Theory of Moral Sentiments, Vol. II. pp. 223, 224.

of our country to all partial considerations. It was upon this very principle, added to a sublime sentiment of piety, that it founded its chief argument for an entire resignation to the dispensations of Providence. As all events are ordered by perfect wisdom and goodness, the Stoics concluded, that whatever happens is calculated to produce the greatest good possible to the universe in general. As it is agreeable to nature, therefore, that we should prefer the happiness of many to a few, and of all to that of many, they concluded that every event which happens is precisely that which we ourselves would have desired, if we had been acquainted with the whole scheme of the Divine administration. "In what sense," says Epictetus, "are some things said to be according to our nature, and others contrary to it? It is in that sense in which we consider ourselves as separated and detached from all other things. For thus it may be said to be the nature of the foot to be always clean. But if you consider it as a foot, and not as something detached from the rest of the body, it must behove it sometimes to trample in the dirt, and sometimes to tread upon thorns, and sometimes, too, to be cut off for the sake of the whole body; and if it refuses this, it is no longer a foot. Thus, too, ought we to conceive with respect to ourselves. What are you? A man. If you consider yourself as something separated and detached, it is agreeable to your nature to live to old age, to be rich, to be in health. But if you consider yourself as a man, and as a part of the whole, upon account of that whole it will behove you sometimes to be in sickness, sometimes to be exposed to the inconveniency of a sea voyage, sometimes to be in want, and at last perhaps to die before your time. Why then do you complain? Don't you know that by doing so, as the foot ceases to be a foot, so you cease to be a man."

"Oh world," says Antoninus, "all things are suitable to me which are suitable to thee. Nothing is too early or too late for me which is seasonable for thee. All is fruit to me which thy seasons bring forth. From thee are all things; in thee are all things; for thee are all things.

Shall any man say, O beloved city of Cecrops! and wilt not thou say, O beloved city of God!" *

In this tendency of the Stoical philosophy to encourage the active and social virtues, it was most remarkably distinguished from the system of Epicurus. The latter, indeed, seems (as it was first taught) to have been the reverse of that system of sensuality and of libertinism, to which the epithet *Epicurean* is commonly applied in modern times; but it was at best a system of selfishness and prudent indulgence, which placed happiness in a seclusion from care, and in an indifference to all the concerns of mankind. By the Stoics, on the contrary, virtue was supposed to consist in the affectionate performance of every good office towards their fellow creatures, and in full resignation to Providence for every thing independent of their own choice.

It is remarked by Dr. Ferguson that "their different schemes of theology clearly pointed out their opposite plans of morality also. Both admitted the existence of God. But to one the Deity was a retired essence enjoying *itself*, and far removed from any work of creation and Providence.

"The other considered the Deity as the principle of existence and of order in the universe, from whom all intelligence proceeds, and to whom all intelligence will return; whose power is the irresistible energy of wisdom and of goodness, ever present and ever active; bestowing on man the faculty of reason and the freedom of choice, that he may learn, in acting for the general good, to imitate the Divine nature; and that, in respect of events independent of his will, he may acquiesce in the determination of Providence."

"In conformity with these principles one sect recommended seclusion from all the cares of family or state. The other recommended an active part in all the concerns of our fellow creatures, and the steady exertion of a mind benevolent, courageous, and temperate. *Here* the sects essentially differed, *not* in words, as has sometimes been alleged, but in the views which they en-

* Smith's Translation. Theory of Moral Sentiments, Vol. II. pp. 254, 255.

tertained of a plan for the conduct of human life. The Epicurean was a deserter from the cause of his fellow creatures, and might justly be reckoned a traitor to the community of nature, of mankind, and even of his country."

"The Stoic enlisted himself as a willing instrument in the hand of God for the good of his fellow creatures. For himself, the cares and attentions which this object required were his *pleasures*, and the continued exertion of a beneficent affection, his *welfare* and his prosperity." *

Such was the philosophy of the Stoics;—"a philosophy," says Mr. Smith, "which affords the noblest lessons of magnanimity, is the best school of heroes and patriots; and to the greater part of whose precepts there can be no other objection but this honorable one, that they teach us to aim at a perfection altogether beyond the reach of human nature."

I cannot however help remarking, that this is by no means an *objection* to their system; for it is the business of the moralist to exhibit a standard far above the reach of our possible attainments. If he did otherwise, he must recommend errors and imperfections. "It has sometimes happened," says Quinctilian, speaking of eloquence and the fine arts, and the observation holds equally with respect to every other pursuit, "that great things have been accomplished by him who was striving at what was above his power." † To the same purpose it is well said by Seneca. "It is the mark of a generous spirit to aim at what is lofty; to attempt what is arduous; and ever to keep in view what it is impossible for the most splendid talents to accomplish." ‡

The Stoics themselves were sensible of the weakness inseparable from humanity. "Neither indeed," says Cicero, speaking the language of a Stoic, "when the two Decii or the two Scipios are mentioned as *brave*

* Principles of Moral and Political Science, Vol. II. pp. 4, 5.—See also Dr. Ferguson's Roman History, chap. 18.

† "Evenit non nunquam, ut aliquid grande inveniat, qui semper quærit quod nimium est."—*Inst.* ii. 12.

‡ "Generosa res est—conari alta, tentare et mente majora concipere, quam quæ tiam ingenti animo adornatis effici possint."—*De vitâ Beatâ*, c. 20.

men, nor when Aristides or Fabricius are denominated *just*, is an example of fortitude in the former, or of justice in the latter, proposed as exactly conformable to the precepts of wisdom. For none of them were *wise* in that sense in which we apply the epithet to the *wise man*. Nor were Cato and Lælius such, although they were honored with the appellation. No, not even the seven wise men of Greece who have been so widely celebrated, although, *from the habitual discharge of middle duties, (ex mediorum officiorum frequentiâ)* all of them bore a certain similitude to the ideal character." * Seneca also mentions it as a general confession of the greatest philosophers, that the doctrine they taught was not "quemadmodum ipsi viverent, sed quemadmodum vivendum est." † "I know," says Epictetus, "that I shall not be Milo, and yet I neglect not my body; nor Crœsus, and yet I neglect not my estate; nor in general do we desist from the proper care of any thing through despair of arriving at what is supreme." ‡

In the writings indeed of some of the Stoics, we meet with some absurd and violent paradoxes about the perfect felicity of the wise man on the one hand, and the *equality of misery* among all those who fall short of this ideal character on the other. "As all the actions of the wise man were perfect, so all those of the man who had not arrived at this supreme wisdom were faulty and equally faulty. As one truth could not be more true, nor one falsehood more false than another, so an honorable action could not be more honorable, nor a shameful one more shameful than another. As in shooting at a mark, the man who had missed it by an inch had equally missed it with him who had done so by an hundred yards, so the man who, in what appears to us the most insignificant action, had acted improperly, and without a

* "Nec vero, cum duo Decii, aut duo Scipiones, fortes viri commemorantur, aut cum Fabricius, Aristidesve justus nominatur; aut ab illis fortitudinis, aut ab his justitiæ, tamquam *a sapientibus*, petitur exemplum. Nemo enim horum *sic sapiens est*, ut *sapientem volumus intelligi*. Nec ii, qui sapientes habiti sunt et nominati, M. Cato et C. Lælius, sapientes fuerunt; ne illi quidem septem: Sed, ex mediorum officiorum frequentiâ, similitudinem quandam gerebant speciemque sapientûm."—*De Offic.* L. iii. c. 4.

† De Vitâ Beatâ, c. 18.

‡ Arr. Epict. L. i. c. 2.

sufficient reason, was equally faulty with him who had done so in what appears to us the most important; the man who has killed a cock (for example) improperly, and without a sufficient reason, with him who had murdered his father.

"It is not, however," continues Mr. Smith, "by any means probable that these paradoxes formed a part of the original principles of *stoicism*, as taught by Zeno and Cleanthes. It is much more probable that they were added to it by their disciple, Chrysippus, whose genius seems to have been more fitted for systematizing the doctrines of his preceptors, and adorning them with the imposing appendages of artificial definitions and divisions, than for imbibing the sublime spirit which they breathed. Such a man may very easily be supposed to have understood too literally some animated and exaggerated expressions of his masters in describing the happiness of the man of perfect virtue, and the unhappiness of whoever fell short of that character."

That these paradoxes were not adopted by the most rational admirers of the Stoical philosophy we have complete evidence; for we find them treating expressly of those *imperfect* virtues which are attained by inferior proficients in wisdom, and which they did not dignify with the name of *rectitudes*, but distinguished by the epithets of *proper*, *fit*, and *decent*.

Such virtues are called by Cicero *officia*, and by Seneca *convenientia*. They are treated of by Cicero in his *Offices*, and are said to have been the subject of a book (now lost) by Marcus Brutus.

This apology, however, it must be confessed, will not extend to all the errors of the Stoical school. In particular, it will not extend to the notions it inculcated on the subject of *suicide*. But for these errors, if it is impossible to apologize, we may at least account in some measure, by the peculiar circumstances of the times when this philosophy arose, and which infected with the same spirit, though perhaps not in an equal degree, the peaceable and indolent followers of Epicurus. "During the age," says Mr. Smith, "in which flourished the founders of all the principal sects of ancient philosophy:

—during the Peloponnesian war, and for many ages after its conclusion,—all the different republics of Greece were at home almost always distracted by the most furious factions, and abroad involved in the most sanguinary wars, in which each sought not merely superiority or dominion, but either completely to extirpate all its enemies, or, what was not less cruel, to reduce them into the vilest of all states—that of domestic slavery. The smallness of the greater part of those states, too, rendered it to each of them no very improbable event, that it might itself fall into that very calamity which it had so frequently inflicted or attempted to inflict on its neighbours. In this disorderly state of things the most perfect innocence, joined to the highest rank and the greatest services to the public, could give no security to any man, that even at home and among his fellow citizens, he was not, at some time or other, from the prevalence of some hostile and furious faction, to be condemned to the most cruel and ignominious punishment. If he was taken prisoner of war, or if the city of which he was a member was conquered, he was exposed, if possible, to still greater injuries. As an American savage, therefore, prepares his death song, and considers how he should act when he has fallen into the hands of his enemies, and is by them put to death in the most lingering tortures, and amidst the insults and derisions of all the spectators, so a Grecian patriot or hero could not avoid frequently employing his thoughts in considering what he ought both to suffer and to do in banishment, in captivity, when reduced to slavery, when put to the torture, when brought to the scaffold. It was the business of their philosophers to prepare the death song which the Grecian patriots and heroes might make use of on the proper occasions; and of all the different sects it must, I think, be acknowledged, that the Stoics had prepared by far the most animated and spirited song." *

After all, it is impossible to deny that there is some foundation for a censure which Lord Bacon has some-

* Moral Sentiments, Vol. II. p. 286.

where passed on this celebrated sect. "Certainly," says he, "the Stoics bestowed too much cost on death, and by their preparations made it more fearful." At least, I suspect this may be the tendency of *some* passages in their writings, in such a state of society as that in which we live; but in perusing them we ought always to remember the circumstances of those men to whom they were addressed, and which are so eloquently described in the observations just quoted from Mr. Smith. The practical reflection which Bacon adds to this censure is invaluable, and is strictly conformable to the spirit of the Stoical system, although he seems to state it by way of contrast to their principles. "It is as natural," says he, "to die as to be born; and to a little infant perhaps the one is as painful as the other. HE THAT DIES IN AN EARNEST PURSUIT IS LIKE ONE THAT IS WOUNDED IN HOT BLOOD, WHO FOR A TIME SCARCE FEELS THE HURT; AND THEREFORE A MIND FIXED AND BENT UPON SOMEWHAT THAT IS GOOD DOTH BEST AVERT THE DOLORS OF DEATH."

Upon the whole, notwithstanding the imperfections of this system, and the paradoxes which disgrace it in some accounts of it that have descended to our times, it cannot be disputed, that its leading doctrines are agreeable to the purest principles of morality and religion. Indeed, they all terminate in one maxim: That we should not make the attainment of things external an ultimate object, but place the business of life in doing our duty, and leave the care of our happiness to him who made us. Nor does the whole merit of these doctrines consist in their purity. It is doing them no more than justice to say, that they were more completely systematical in all their parts, and more ingeniously, as well as eloquently, supported, than any thing else that remains of ancient philosophy.

I must not conclude these observations on the Stoical system, without taking notice of the practical effects it produced on the characters of many of its professors. It was the precepts of this school which rendered the supreme power in the hands of Marcus Aurelius a blessing to the human race; and which secured the private

happiness, and elevated the minds of Helvidius and Thrasea under a tyranny by which their country was oppressed. Nor must it be forgotten, that in the last struggles of Roman liberty, while the school of Epicurus produced Cæsar, that of Zeno produced Cato and Brutus. The one sacrificed mankind to himself; the others sacrificed themselves to mankind.

—"Hi mores, hæc duri immota Catonis
Secta fuit, servare modum, finemque tenere,
Naturamque sequi, patriæque impendere vitam;
Nec sibi, sed toti genitum se credere mundo."*

The sentiment of *President Montesquieu* on this subject is well known. "Never," says he, "were any principles more worthy of human nature, and more proper to form the good citizen, than those of the Stoics; and if I could for a moment cease to recollect that I am a Christian, I should not be able to hinder myself from ranking the destruction of the sect of Zeno among the misfortunes that have befallen the human race."†

III

The doctrine of the *Peripatetics* on this subject appears to have coincided with that of the *Pythagorean* school, who defined *happiness* to be "*the exercise of virtue in a prosperous life;*" (χρῆσις ἀρετῆς ἐν εὐτυχίᾳ); a definition like several others transmitted to us from the same source, which unites in a remarkable degree the merits of conciseness and of philosophical precision.

In confirmation of this doctrine, the Pythagorean school observed, that it was not the *mere possession* but the *exercise* of virtue that made men happy.‡ And for the proper exercise of virtue, they thought that good

* Lucan. Phars. Lib. ii. l. 380.

† "Les diverses sectes de philosophie chez les anciens étoient des espéces de religion. Il n'y en a jamais eu dont les principes fussent plus dignes de l'homme et plus propre à former des gens de bien, que celle des Stoïciens; et si je pouvois un moment cesser de penser que je suis Chrétien, je ne pourrois m'empêcher de mettre la destruction de la secte de Zénon au nombre des malheurs du genre humain." —*Esprit des Loix*, Liv. xxiv. chap. 10.

‡ See the Fragments of this School, published in Gale's Opuscula Mythologica, Physica, et Ethica. Amstel. 1688.

fortune was as necessary as light is for the exercise of the faculty of sight. The utmost length, accordingly, which they went was to say, that the virtuous man in adversity was *not miserable;* whereas the vicious and foolish were miserable in all situations of fortune. In another passage they say, that the difference between God and man is, that God is perfect in himself, and needs nothing from without; whereas the nature of man is imperfect and defective, and dependent on external circumstances. Although, therefore, we possess virtue, that is but the perfection of *one* part, namely, the mind; but as we consist both of body and mind, the body also must be perfect of its kind. Nor is that alone sufficient; but the prosperous exercise of virtue requires certain *externals;* such as wealth, reputation, friends, and, above all, a *well constituted state;* for without that the rational and social animal is imperfect, and unable to fulfil the purposes of its nature.

The difference between the *Peripatetics and Stoics* in these opinions is beautifully stated by Cicero, in a passage strongly expressive of the elevation of his own character, as well as highly honorable to the two sects, whose doctrines, while he *contrasts* them with each other, he plainly considered as both originating in the same pure and ardent zeal for the interests of morality. "Pugnant Stoici cum Peripateticis; alteri negant quidquam bonum esse nisi quod honestum sit; alteri longe longeque plurimum se attribuere honestati; sed tamen et in corpore et extra esse quædam bona. Certamen honestum, et disputatio splendida."

On a general review of the preceding articles in this section, it appears (to use the words of Dr. Ferguson) that all these sects acknowledged the necessity of virtue, or allowed, that, in every well directed pursuit of happiness, the strictest regard to morality was required. The Stoics alone maintained that this regard itself was happiness; or that to run the course of an active, strenuous, wise, and beneficent mind, was itself the very good which we ought to pursue.

SECTION III.

Additional Remarks on Happiness.

FROM the slight view now given of the systems of philosophers with respect to the Sovereign Good, it may be assumed as an acknowledged and indisputable fact, that happiness arises chiefly from the mind. The Stoics undoubtedly expressed this too strongly when they said, that to a wise man external circumstances are indifferent. Yet it must be confessed, that happiness depends much less on these than is commonly imagined; and that, as there is no situation so prosperous as to exclude the torments of malice, cowardice, and remorse, so there is none so adverse as to withhold the enjoyments of a benevolent, resolute, and upright heart.

If, from the sublime idea of a perfectly wise and virtuous man, we descend to such characters as the world presents to us, some important limitations of the Stoical conclusions become necessary. Mr. Hume has justly remarked, that, "as in the bodily system, a *toothach* produces more violent convulsions of pain than *phthisis* or a *dropsy*, so, in the economy of the mind, although all vice be pernicious, yet the disturbance or pain is not measured out by nature with exact proportion to the degree of vice; nor is the man of highest virtue, even abstracting from external accidents, always the most happy. A gloomy and melancholy disposition is certainly to our sentiments a vice or imperfection; but as it may be accompanied with a great sense of honor and great integrity, it may be found in very worthy characters; though it is sufficient alone to embitter life, and render the person afflicted with it completely miserable. On the other hand, a selfish villain may possess a spring and alacrity of temper, a certain *gayety of heart*, which is rewarded much beyond its merit; and when attended with good fortune, will compensate for the uneasiness and remorse arising from all the other vices."

Abstracting even from these considerations, and supposing a character as perfect as the frailty of human na-

ture admits of, various mental qualities, which have no immediate connexion with moral desert, are necessary to ensure happiness. In proof of this remark, it is sufficient to consider, how much our tranquillity is liable to be affected,

1. By our temper;
2. By our imagination;
3. By our opinions; and
4. By our habits.

In all these respects the mind may be influenced to a great degree by original constitution or by early education; and when this influence happens to be unfavorable, it is not to be corrected at once by the precepts of philosophy. Much, however, may be done undoubtedly, in such instances, by our own persevering efforts; and, therefore, the particulars now enumerated deserve our attention, not only from their connexion with the speculative question concerning the essentials of happiness, but on account of the practical conclusions to which the consideration of them may lead.

I.

Influence of the Temper on Happiness.

The word *Temper* is used in different senses. Sometimes we apply to it the epithets *gay, lively, melancholy, gloomy;* on other occasions, the epithets *fretful, passionate, sullen, cool, equable, gentle.* It is in the *last* sense we use it at present, to denote the habitual state of a man's mind in point of *irascibility;* or, in other words, to mark the habitual predominance of the *benevolent* or *malevolent* affections in his intercourse with his fellow creatures.

The connexion between this part of the character of an individual, and the habitual state of his mind in point of happiness, is obvious from what was formerly observed concerning the pleasures and pains attached respectively to the exercise of our benevolent and malevolent affections. As nature has strengthened the social

ties among mankind, by annexing a secret charm to every exercise of good will and of kindness, so she has provided a check on all the discordant passions, by that agitation and disquiet which are their inseparable concomitants. This is true even with respect to resentment, how justly soever it may be provoked by the injurious conduct of others. It is always accompanied with an unpleasant feeling, which warns us, as soon as we have taken the necessary measures for our own security, to banish every sentiment of malice from the heart. On the due regulation of this part of our constitution, our happiness in life materially depends; and there is no part of it whatever where it is in our power, by our persevering efforts, to do more to cure our *constitutional* or our *acquired* infirmities.

Resentment was formerly distinguished into *instinctive* and *deliberate*, the latter of which (it was observed) has always a reference to the motives of the person against whom it is directed, and implies a sense of justice or of moral good or evil.

In some men the animal or instinctive impulse is stronger than in others. Where this is the case, or where proper care has not been taken in early education to bring it under restraint, a quick or irascible temper is the consequence. This fault is frequently observable in affectionate and generous characters, and impairs their happiness, not so much by the effects it produces on their minds, as by the eventual misfortunes to which it exposes them.* The sentiments of ill will which such men feel are only momentary, and the habitual state of their mind is benevolent and happy; but as their reason is the sport of every accident, the best dispositions of the heart can at no time give any security that they shall not, before they sleep, experience some paroxysm of insanity, which shall close all their prospects of hap-

* "Irascible men," says Aristotle, "though moved to passion too suddenly, in immoderate degrees, and on improper occasions, are yet easily pacified; if they be soon angry they are also soon pleased, which is the best circumstance attending them."—(*Ethic. Nic.* B. 4. c. 5.) Cicero states this still more strongly in a letter to Atticus. "Irritabiles animos esse optimorum sæpe hominum, et eosdem placabiles; et esse hanc agilitatem, ut ita dicam, mollitiamque naturæ plerumque bonitatis."—*Epist. ad Atticum*, Lib. i. epist. xvii.

piness for ever. A frequent and serious consideration of the fatal consequences which may arise from sudden and ungoverned passion cannot fail to have some tendency to check its excesses. It is an infirmity which is often produced by some fault in early education; by allowing children to exercise authority over their dependents, and not providing for them, in the opposition of their equals, a sufficient discipline and preparation for the conflicts they may expect to struggle with in future life.

When the animal resentment does not immediately subside, it must be supported by an opinion of bad intention in its object; and, consequently, when this happens to an individual so habitually as to be characteristic of his temper, it indicates a disposition on *his* part to put unfavorable constructions on the actions of others, or (as we commonly express it) *to take things by the wrong handle.* In some instances this may proceed from a settled conviction of the worthlessness of mankind; but in general it originates in self-dissatisfaction, occasioned by the consciousness of vice or folly, which leads the person who feels it to withdraw his attention from himself, by referring the causes of his ill humor to the imaginary faults of his neighbours. Such men do not wait till provocation is given them, but *look out* anxiously for occasions of quarrel, creating to themselves, by the help of imagination, an object suited to that particular humor they wish to indulge; and, when their resentment is once excited, they obstinately refuse to listen to any thing that may be offered in the way of extenuation or apology. In feeble minds this displays itself in peevishness, which vents itself languidly upon any object it meets. In more vigorous and determined minds it produces violent and boisterous passion. For, as Butler has well remarked, both of these seem to be the operation of the same principle, appearing in different forms, according to the constitution of the individual. "In the one case the humor discharges itself *at once;* in the other it is continually discharging."

There is, too, a species of misanthropy which is sometimes grafted on a worthy and benevolent heart. When

the standard of moral excellence we have been accustomed to conceive is greatly elevated above the common attainments of humanity, we are apt to become too difficult and fastidious (if I may use the expression) in our *moral taste;* or, in plainer language, we become unreasonably censorious of the follies and vices of the age in which we live. In such cases it may happen that the native benevolence of the mind, by being habitually directed towards ideal characters, may prove a source of real disaffection and dislike to those with whom we associate. Such a disposition, (when carried to an extreme) not only sours the temper and dries up all the springs of innocent satisfaction which nature has so liberally provided for us in the common incidents of life, but, by withdrawing a man from active pursuits, renders all his talents and virtue useless to society.* The great nurse and cherisher of this species of misanthropy is solitary contemplation; and the only effectual remedy is society in business, together with a habit of directing the attention rather to the improvement of our own characters, than to a jealous and suspicious examination of the motives which influence the conduct of our neighbours.

This last observation leads me to remark further, that one great cause of this perversion of our nature is a very common and fatal prejudice, which leads men to believe that the degree of their own virtue is proportioned to the justness and the liveliness of their moral feelings; whereas in truth virtue consists neither in liveliness of feeling, nor in rectitude of judgment, but in an habitual regard to our sense of duty in the conduct of life. To enlighten, indeed, our conscience with respect to the part which we ourselves have to act, and to cultivate that quick and delicate sense of propriety which may restrain us from every offence, how trifling

* A character of this description has furnished to Molière the subject of his most finished comedy; and to Marmontel of one of his most agreeable and useful moral tales. The former of these is universally known as the *chef-d'œuvre* of the French stage; but the latter possesses also an uncommon degree of merit, by the hints it suggests for curing the weaknesses in which the character originates, and by the interesting contrast it exhibits between the Misanthrope of Molière and a man who unites inflexibility of principle with that accommodation of temper which is necessary for the practical exercise of virtue.

soever it may appear, against the laws of morality, is an essential part of our duty; and what a strong sense of duty, aided by a sound understanding, will naturally lead to. But to exercise our powers of moral judgment and moral feeling on the character and conduct of our neighbours, is so far from being necessarily connected with our moral improvement, that it has frequently a tendency to withdraw our attention from the real state of our own characters; and to flatter us with a belief, that the degree in which we possess the different virtues is proportioned to the indignation excited in our minds by the want of them in others. That this rule of judgment is at least *not infallible* may be inferred from the common observation, (justified by the experience of every man who has paid any attention to human life) that the most scrupulous men in their own conduct are generally the most indulgent to the faults of their fellow creatures. I will not go quite so far as to assert with Dr. Hutcheson, (although I believe his remark has much foundation in truth) "that men have commonly the good or the bad qualities which they ascribe to mankind." I shall content myself with repeating after Mr. Addison, "that, among all the monstrous characters in human nature, there is none so odious, nor indeed so exquisitely ridiculous, as that of a rigid, severe temper in a worthless man;" * an observation which, from the manner in which he states it, evidently shows that he did not consider this union as a very *rare* occurrence among the numberless inconsistencies in our moral judgments and habits.

But what we are chiefly concerned at present to remark, is the tendency of a censorious disposition with respect to our own *happiness*. That favorable opinions of our species, and those benevolent affections towards them which such opinions produce, are sources of exquisite enjoyment to those who entertain them, no person will dispute. But there are two very different ways in which men set about the attainment of this satisfaction. One set of men aim at modelling the world to their own

* Spectator, No. 169.

wish, and repine in proportion to the disappointments they experience in their plans of general reformation. Another, while they do what they can to improve their fellow creatures, consider it as *their* chief business to watch over their own characters; and as they cannot succeed to their wish in making mankind what they ought to be, they study to accommodate their views and feelings to the order of Providence. They exert their ingenuity in apologizing for folly and misconduct, and are always more disposed to praise than to blame: And when they see unquestionable and unpardonable delinquencies, they avail themselves of such occurrences, not as occasions for venting indignation and abuse, but as lessons of admonition to themselves, and as calls to attempt the amendment of the delinquent by gentle and friendly remonstrances. Of these two plans it is easy to see that the one, while it appears flattering to the indolence of the individual, (because it requires no efforts of self-denial) must necessarily engage him in impracticable and hopeless efforts. The other, although it requires force of mind to put it in execution, is within the reach of every man to accomplish in a degree highly important to his own character, and to his own comfort. This indeed I apprehend is the *great secret* of happiness, —to study to accommodate our own minds to things external, rather than to accommodate things external to ourselves; and there are no instances in which the practice of the rule is of more consequence than in our intercourse with our fellow creatures. Let us do what we can to amend them, but let us trust for our *happiness* to what depends on ourselves. Nor is there any delusion necessary for this purpose; for the fairest views of human character are in truth the justest; and the more intimately we know mankind, the less we shall be misled by the partialities of pride and self-love; and the more shall we be disposed to acknowledge the merits, and to pardon the frailties of others.

"The regulating our apprehensions of the actions of others," says Dr. Hutcheson, "is of very great importance, that we may not imagine mankind worse than they really are, and thereby bring on ourselves a temper full

of suspicion, hatred, anger, and contempt towards others, which is a constant state of misery, much worse than all the evils to be feared from credulity. If we examine the true springs of human actions, we shall seldom find their motives worse than self-love. Men are often subject to anger, and on sudden provocations do injuries to each other, and *that* only from self-love, without malice; but the greatest part of their lives is employed in offices of natural affection and friendship, innocent self-love, or love of a country. The little party prejudices are generally founded upon ignorance or false opinions, rather apt to move pity than hatred. Such considerations are the best preservative against anger, malice and discontent of mind with the order of nature." *

These observations suggest the most important of all expedients for correcting those infirmities in which a bad temper originates;—to cultivate that candor with respect to the motives of others, which results from habits of attention to our own infirmities, and from habits of reflection in our cooler moments on the numerous circumstances which, independently of any criminal intention, may produce the *appearance* of vice in human conduct.†

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* Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, Sect. iv. 4.

† Another expedient of very powerful effect is to suppress, as far as possible, the external signs of peevishness or of violence. So intimate is the connexion between mind and body, that the mere imitation of any strong expression has a tendency to excite the corresponding passion; and, on the other hand, the suppression of the external sign has a tendency to compose the passion which it indicates. It is said of Socrates, that, whenever he felt the passion of resentment arising in his mind, he became instantly silent; and I have no doubt, that, by observing this rule, he not only avoided many an occasion of giving offence to others, but added much to the comfort of his own life, by killing the seeds of those malignant affections which are the great bane of human happiness.

Something of the same kind, though proceeding from a less worthy motive, we may see daily exemplified in the case of those men who are peevish and unhappy in their own families, while in the company of strangers they are good humored and cheerful. At home they give vent to all their passions without restraint, and exasperate their original irritability by the reaction of that bodily agitation which it occasions. In promiscuous society the restraints of ceremony render this impossible. They find themselves obliged to conceal studiously whatever emotions of dissatisfaction they may feel, and soon come to experience, in fact, that gentle and accommodating temper of which they have been striving to counterfeit the appearance.—See *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, Vol. III. p. 154.

On these principles is founded a practice which, if I am not misinformed, is followed by that respectable body of men called Quakers, in the education of their children;—to accustom them from their earliest infancy to an equable and monotonous softness of voice; and to check every deviation from it, even in those cases

Abstracting, however, from these considerations, founded on candid and indulgent views towards our fellow creatures, it is of essential importance for our happiness, as well as a duty necessarily resulting from our conviction of the sacredness of moral obligation, to cherish in our minds a devoted attachment to truth and to virtue, on account of their own *intrinsic excellence;* and to cherish it with a peculiar care, if our lot should be cast in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. No error can be more fatal (as Dr. Ferguson has excellently remarked) than "to rest our own choice of good qualities on the supposition, that we are to meet with such qualities in other men, or to apprehend that want of merit in our fellow creatures will dispense with that justice or liberality of conduct which we ought to maintain." *

Reflections of this sort are, in a peculiar degree, consolatory and useful in such times as we have lately witnessed, when the occasional successes of violence and injustice were apt to shake the confidence of the firmest and most upright characters, and, by suggesting melancholy apprehensions concerning the fortunes of the human race, to damp the benevolent exertions of its warmest and most enlightened friends. "The contemporaries of a great political revolution," says a profound and eloquent writer, "lose frequently all interest in the search of truth, and in the dissemination of right principles. So many events decided by force; so many crimes absolved by success; so many misfortunes insulted by power; so many generous sentiments rendered objects of ridicule;—all conspire to wear out the

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where the tranquillity of their minds must unavoidably be disturbed by accidental occurrences. No expedient more effectual could be thought of for cherishing that evenness and serenity of soul, which, while it renders us inoffensive to others, prepares us to receive without alloy whatever innocent gratifications are placed within our reach.—In practising this rule, however, is there not some danger of producing a sullenness of temper? The following observations of Aristotle (though they are in some respects questionable) deserve at least to be well considered. "The resentful and implacable temper retains anger long, because it does not give free vent to it; for to vent anger in vengeance naturally appeases it by substituting pleasure in the stead of pain, but passion restrained gathers strength by compression, and, as it remains hid within the breast, the gentle power of persuasion cannot be applied for its alleviation; it must be digested by the internal vigor of the constitution, which is a work of time."—*Arist. Ethic. Nic.* B. iv. c. 5.

* Inst. p. 169. Third Edition.

hopes even of those men who are the most faithful to the cause of justice and humanity. Nevertheless, they ought to take courage from the reflection, that, in the history of the human mind, there has never existed one useful thought, nor one important truth, which has not found its age and its admirers." *

The influence of the temper on happiness is much increased by another circumstance; that the same causes which alienate our affections from our fellow creatures are apt to suggest unfavorable views of the course of human affairs, and lead the mind by an easy transition to gloomy conceptions of the general order of the universe. In this state of mind, when, in the language of *Hamlet*, "*Man delights us not*,"—the sentiment of misanthropy seldom fails to be accompanied with that dark and hopeless philosophy which Shakspeare has, with such exquisite knowledge of the human heart, described as springing up with it from the same root. "This goodly frame, the earth, appears a sterile promontory; —this majestical roof, fretted with golden fires, a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors;—and Man himself—noble in reason, infinite in faculties— this beauty of the world—this paragon of animals, seems but the *quintessence of dust*." Such a temper and such views are not only to the possessor the completion of wretchedness, but, by the proofs they exhibit of insensibility and ingratitude towards the Great Source of happiness and perfection, they argue some defect in those *moral feelings* to which many men lay claim, who affect an indifference to all serious impressions and sentiments. They argue at least what Milton has finely called a *sullenness against nature*,—a disposition of mind which no man could possibly feel whose temper was rightly constituted towards his fellow creatures. How congenial to the best emotions of the heart is the following sentiment in his *Tractate on Education*. "In those vernal seasons of the year, when the air is soft and pleasant, it were an injury and sullenness against Nature not to go

* De la Littérature considérée dans ses rapports avec les Institutions Sociales; par Mad. de Staël-Holstein.—Introduction, p. 4.

out and see her riches, and partake in her rejoicings with heaven and earth."

The true foundation of *the vernal delight* which is here so beautifully described,—of this *sympathy*, if I may be allowed the expression, with rejoicing Nature, is a benevolent heart to mankind; a disposition to rejoice with our Maker in the general happiness of his whole creation. To this disposition, when displayed in the lesser offices of ordinary life, we commonly give the name of *good humor;* an expression which, though we sometimes connect with it the idea of levity, yet, when it denotes an habitual state of mind, originating in candor, indulgence, and benevolence, is descriptive of that precise frame which best prepares us to speculate with success on the gravest and most important of all subjects. "Good humor," says Lord Shaftesbury, "is not only the best security against enthusiasm, but the best foundation of piety and true religion: for if right thoughts and worthy apprehensions of the Supreme Being are fundamental to all true worship and adoration, 'tis more than probable that we shall never miscarry in this respect, except through ill humor only. Nothing beside ill humor, can bring a man to think seriously, that the world is governed by any devilish or malicious power. I very much question whether any thing, besides ill humor, can be the cause of atheism. For there are so many arguments to persuade a man in good humor, that, in the main, all things are kindly and well disposed, that one would think it impossible for him to be so far out of conceit with affairs, as to imagine they all ran at adventures; and that the world, as wise and venerable a face as it carried, had neither sense nor meaning in it. This, however, I am persuaded of, that nothing beside ill humor can give us dreadful or ill thoughts of a Supreme Manager. Nothing can persuade us of sullenness or sourness in such a Being, beside the actual fore feeling of somewhat of this kind within ourselves."

As the temper has an influence on our speculative opinions, so the views we form of the administration of the Universe, and, in particular, of the condition, and prospects of Man, have a reciprocal effect on the tem-

per. The belief of overruling wisdom and goodness communicates the most heartfelt of all satisfactions; and the idea of prevailing order and happiness has an habitual effect in composing the discordant affections, similar to what we experience when, in some retired and tranquil scene, we enjoy the sweet serenity of a summer evening.

This tendency of the mind, on the one hand, to *harmonize* its affections, and, on the other, to suffer the passions to run into *anarchy*, according as it thinks well or ill of the order of the universe; or (which comes to the same thing) this influence of an enlightened religion on the temper, is alluded to more than once in that beautiful poem the *Pleasures of Imagination*. In the following passage of one of his odes, Akenside has employed, in confirmation of this doctrine, the same illustration to which I have just alluded; I mean the effect which particular aspects of the *material* universe have on the *moral* and social feelings.

"Thron'd in the sun's descending car,
What power unseen diffuseth far
This tenderness of mind!
What Genius smiles on yonder flood;
What God, in whispers from the wood,
Bids every thought be kind!

"O Thou, whate'er thine awful name,
Whose goodness our untoward frame
With social love constrains;
Thou, who by fair affection's ties
Giv'st us to double all our joys
And half disarm our pains;

"Let universal candor still,
Clear as yon heaven-reflecting rill,
Preserve my open mind;
Nor this, nor that man's crooked ways
One sordid doubt within me raise
To injure human kind."

II.

Influence of the Imagination on Happiness.

One of the principal effects of a liberal education is to accustom us to withdraw our attention from the objects of our present perceptions, and to dwell at pleasure on the past, the absent, and the future. How much it must enlarge in this way the sphere of our enjoyment or suffering is obvious; for (not to mention the recollection of the past) all that part, of our happiness or misery, which arises from our *hopes* or our *fears*, derives its existence entirely from the power of Imagination.

It is not, however, from education alone that the differences among individuals in respect of this faculty seem to arise. Even among those who have enjoyed the same advantages of mental culture, we find some men in whom it never makes any considerable appearance,—men whose thoughts seem to be completely engrossed with the objects and events with which their senses are conversant, and on whose minds the impressions produced by what is absent and future are so comparatively languid, that they seldom or never excite their passions or arrest their attention. In others, again, the coloring which imagination throws on the objects they conceive is so brilliant, that even the present impressions of sense are unable to stand the comparison; and the thoughts are perpetually wandering from this world of realities to fairy scenes of their own creation. In such men, the imagination is the principal source of their pleasurable or painful sensations, and their happiness or misery is in a great measure determined by the gay or melancholy cast, which this faculty has derived from original constitution or from acquired habits.

When the *hopes* or the *fears* which imagination inspires prevail over the present importunity of our sensual appetites, it is a proof of the superiority which the intellectual part of our character has acquired over the animal; and as the course of life which wisdom and virtue prescribe requires frequently a sacrifice of the

present to the *future*, a warm and vigorous imagination is sometimes of essential use, by exhibiting those lively prospects of solid and permanent happiness which may counteract the allurements of present pleasure. In those who are enslaved completely by their sensual appetites, imagination may indeed operate in anticipating future gratification, or it may blend itself with memory in the recollection of past enjoyment; but where this is the case, imagination is so far from answering its intended purpose, that it establishes an unnatural alliance between our intellectual powers and our animal desires; and extends the empire of the latter, by filling up the intervals of actual indulgence with habits of thought, more degrading and ruinous, if possible, to the rational part of our being, than the time which is employed in criminal gratification.

In such individuals, imagination is but a prolongation of sensual indulgences, and scarcely merits the appellation of an intellectual power. It brutifies the man, indeed, still more than he could possibly become, if it did not form a part of his constitution, and if he were merely a compound of reason and passion. To such men, it surely cannot be considered as a constituent of what deserves the name of happiness. On the contrary, by increasing the importunate cravings of desire beyond those limits which nature prescribes, it abridges that sphere of innocent gratification which the Beneficent Author of our Being intends us to enjoy.

In mentioning, however, the influence of imagination on happiness, what I had chiefly in view was the addition which is made to our enjoyments or sufferings, on the whole, by the predominance of *hope* or of *fear* in the habitual state of our minds. One man is continually led, by the complexion of his temper, to forebode evil to himself and to the world; while another, after a thousand disappointments, looks forward to the future with exultation, and feels his confidence in Providence unshaken. One principal cause of such differences is undoubtedly the natural constitution of the mind in point of fortitude. The weak and the timid are under continual alarm from the apprehension of evils which are barely possible, and

fancy "there is a lion in the way," when they are called on to discharge the common duties of life; although, in truth, (as one of our poets has remarked) the evils they apprehend, supposing them actually to happen, cannot exceed those they habitually suffer.

> "Is there an evil worse than fear itself?
> And what avails it that indulgent Heaven
> From mortal eyes has wrapt the woes to come,
> If we, ingenious to torment ourselves,
> Grow pale at hideous fictions of our own?
> Enjoy the present; nor with heedless cares
> Of what *may* spring from blind misfortune's womb,
> Appal the surest hour that life bestows:
> Serene, and master of yourself, prepare
> For what may come, and leave the rest to Heaven."*

It may be worth while here to remark, that what we properly call *cowardice* is entirely a disease of the imagination. It does not always imply an impatience under present suffering. On the contrary, it is frequently observed in men who submit quietly to the evils which they have actually experienced, and of which they have thus learned to measure the extent with accuracy. Nay, there are cases in which *patience* is the offspring of *cowardice*, the imagination magnifying future dangers to such a degree as to render present suffering comparatively insignificant.† Men of this description always judge it safer to "bear the ills they know, than fly to others that they know not of;" and of consequence, when under the pressure of pain and disease, scruple to employ those vigorous remedies, which, while they give them a chance for recovery, threaten them with a possibility of a more imminent danger. The brave, on the contrary, are not always patient under distress; and they sometimes perhaps, owe their bravery in part to this impatience. We may remark an apt illustration of this observation in the two sexes. The male is more courageous, but more impatient of suffering; the female more timid, but more resigned and serene under severe pain and affliction.

Abstracting from constitutional biasses, the two great

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* Armstrong's Art of Preserving Health, Book iv.

† "Dolendi modus, timendi non item."

sources of a desponding imagination are *superstition* and *scepticism*. Of the former, the unhappy victims are many and have been so in all ages of the world, although their number may be expected gradually to diminish in proportion to the progress and the diffusion of knowledge. All of us, however, have had an opportunity of witnessing enough of its effects in those remains which are still to be found in many parts of this country, of the old prejudices with respect to apparitions and spectres, to be able to form an idea of what mankind must have suffered in the ages of Gothic ignorance, when these weaknesses of the uninformed mind were skilfully made use of by an ambitious priesthood as an engine of ecclesiastical policy. *Scepticism*, too, when carried to an extreme, can scarcely fail to produce similar effects. As it encourages the notion, that all events are regulated by chance, if it does not alarm the mind with terror, it extinguishes at least every ray of hope; and such is the restless activity of the mind, that it may be questioned whether the agitation of fear be a source of more complete wretchedness than that listlessness which deprives us of all interest about futurity, and represents to us the present moment alone as ours. Nor is this all. A complete scepticism is so unnatural a state to the human understanding, that it was probably never realized in any one instance. Nay, I believe it will generally be found, that, in proportion to the violence of a man's disbelief on those important subjects which are essential to human happiness, the more extravagant is his credulity on other articles where the fashion of the times does not brand credulity as a weakness; for the mind must have something distinct from the objects of sense on which to repose itself; and those principles of our nature, on which religion is founded, if they are prevented from developing themselves under the direction of an enlightened reason, will infallibly disclose themselves in one way or another, in the character and the conduct.

Of this no stronger proof can be produced, than that the same period of the eighteenth century, and the same part of Europe, which was most distinguished by the

triumphs of a sceptical philosophy, was also distinguished by a credulity so extraordinary, or rather so miraculous, as to encourage a greater number of visionaries and impostors than had appeared since the time of the revival of letters. The pretenders to animal magnetism, and the revivers of the Rosicrucian mysteries, are but two instances out of many that might be mentioned.

I have only to add further on this subject, that it is an enlightened philosophy alone which can guard the mind effectually against those superstitious weaknesses which are often to be found in men remarkable, not only for their intrepidity amid the real difficulties and dangers of life, but for their fearless and heroic gallantry in the field of battle. Not to speak of Scipio's faith in dreams, and Cæsar's apprehension about the Ides of March, some of the greatest military characters in modern Europe have, even in our own times, allowed themselves to be imposed on by the artifices of astrologers, nay, of common fortune tellers. Frederick the Great (if we may credit the Marquis de Bouillé) was not without faith in the predictions of conjurers; and the late Gustavus of Sweden (we are positively assured by the same writer) was by no means free from this sort of superstition. He had always dreaded the month of March; and the first word he said to Armfeldt, on finding himself wounded, was to remind him of this circumstance.* The ascendant gained by Rosicrucian Illuminati over the mind of the late Frederick William of Prussia (a prince of unquestionable intrepidity in all military operations) is matter of general notoriety.

Such, then, are the miseries of an ill regulated imagination, whether arising from constitutional biasses, or from the acquisition of erroneous opinions; and they are miseries which, when they affect habitually the state of the mind, are sufficient to poison all the enjoyments which fortune can offer. To those on the contrary, whose education has been fortunately conducted, this faculty opens inexhaustible sources of delight, presenting continually to their thoughts the fairest views of

* Memoirs of the Marquis de Bouillé.

mankind and of Providence, and, under the deepest gloom of adverse fortune, gilding the prospects of futurity.

I have remarked, in the first volume of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, that what we call *sensibility* depends in a great measure on the degree of imagination we possess; and hence, in such a world as ours, checquered as it is with good and evil, there must be in every mind a mixture of pleasure and of pain, proportioned to the interest which imagination leads it to take in the fortunes of mankind. It is even natural and reasonable for a benevolent disposition (notwithstanding what Mr. Smith has so ingeniously alleged to the contrary *) to dwell more habitually on the gloomy than on the gay aspect of human affairs; for the fortunate stand in no need of our assistance; while, amidst the distractions of our own personal concerns, the wretched require all the assistance which our imagination can lend them, to engage our attention to their distresses. In this sympathy, however, with the general sufferings of humanity, the pleasure far overbalances the pain; not only on account of that secret charm which accompanies all the modifications of benevolence, but because it is they alone whose prospects of futurity are sanguine, and whose confidence in the final triumpth of reason and of justice is linked with all the best principles of the heart, who are likely to make a common cause with the oppressed and the miserable. This, therefore, (although we frequently apply to it the epithet *melancholy*) is, on the whole, a happy state of mind, and has no connexion with what we commonly call *low spirits*,—a disease where the pain is unmixed, and which is always accompanied, either as a cause or effect, by the most intolerable of all feelings, a sentiment of self-dissatisfaction; whereas the temper I have now alluded to is felt only by those who are at peace with themselves and with the whole world. Such is that species of *melancholy* which Thomson has so pathetically described as exerting a peculiar influence at that season of the year

* Theory of Moral Sentiments. Sixth Edition, Part iii. chap. iii.

(his own favorite and inspiring season) when the "dark winds of autumn return," and when the falling leaves and the naked fields fill the heart at once with mournful presages and with tender recollections.

"He comes! he comes; in every breeze the *Power*
Of *philosophic melancholy* comes!
His near approach, the sudden starting tear,
The glowing cheek, the mild dejected air,
The softened feature, and the beating heart,
Pierced deep with many a virtuous pang, declare.
O'er all the soul his sacred influence breathes;
Inflames imagination; through the breast
Infuses every tenderness; and far
Beyond dim earth exalts the swelling thought.
Ten thousand thousand fleet ideas, such
As never mingled with the vulgar dream,
Crowd fast into the mind's creative eye.
As fast the correspondent passions rise,
As varied and as high: Devotion rais'd
To rapture and divine astonishment;
The love of nature unconfined, and chief
Of human race; the large ambitious wish
To make them blest; the sigh for suffering worth
Lost in obscurity; the noble scorn
Of tyrant pride; the fearless great resolve;
The wonder which the dying patriot draws,
Inspiring glory through remotest time;
The awakened throb for virtue and for fame;
The sympathies of love, and friendship dear;
With all the social offspring of the heart.

It will not, I think, be denied, that an imagination of the cast here described, while it has an obvious tendency to refine the taste and to exalt the character, enlarges very widely in the man who possesses it the sphere of his enjoyment. It is, however, no less indisputable, that this faculty requires an uncommon share of good sense to keep it under proper regulation, and to derive from it the pleasures it was intended to afford, without suffering it either to mislead the judgment in the conduct of life, or to impair our relish for the moderate gratifications which are provided for our present condition. I have treated at some length of this subject in the first volume of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, under the title of the "*inconveniences resulting from an ill regulated imagination;*" and shall content myself

here with a simple reference to that chapter, without attempting any recapitulation of its contents.

These inconveniences have appeared to some philosophers to be so alarming, that they have concluded it to be one of the most essential objects of education to repress as much as possible this dangerous faculty. But in this, as in other instances, it is in vain to counteract the purposes of nature; and all that human wisdom ought to attempt, is to study the ends which she has apparently in view, and to cooperate with the means which she has provided for their attainment. The very arguments on which these philosophers have proceeded justifies the remark I have now made, and encourages us to follow out the plan I have recommended; for surely the more cruel the effects of a deranged imagination, the happier are the consequences to be expected from this part of our constitution if properly regulated, and if directed to its destined purposes by good sense and philosophy. It is justly remarked by an author in the *Tatler*, as an acknowledged fact, that "of all writings licentious poems do soonest corrupt the heart. And why," continues he, "should we not be as universally persuaded that the grave and serious performances of such as write in the most engaging manner, by a kind of Divine impulse, must be the most effectual persuasive to goodness? The most active principle in our mind is the imagination. To it a good poet makes his court perpetually, and by this faculty takes care to gain it first. Our passions and inclinations come over next, and our reason surrenders itself with pleasure in the end. Thus the whole soul is insensibly betrayed into morality, by bribing the fancy with beautiful and agreeable images of those very things that, in the books of the philosophers, appear austere, and have at the best but a kind of forbidding aspect. In a word, the poets do, as it were, strew the rough paths of virtue so full of flowers, that we are not sensible of the uneasiness of them, and imagine ourselves in the midst of pleasures, and the most bewitching allurements, at the time we are making a progress in the severest duties of life." *

* No. 98.

Hitherto we have been considering the connexion between imagination and happiness in those individuals over whose minds the influence of this faculty is increased by a liberal education beyond the ordinary standard. There is, however, no mind over which it has not some influence more or less; for there is no mind whose estimates of external objects are not affected in some degree by casual *associations*, and of course none in which the conceptions of external objects are not in some degree modified by the power of imagination.

I have elsewhere remarked that the greater part of what Mr. Alison has so finely observed concerning the pleasures of *Taste*, may be applied to the various objects of our pursuit in life. Hardly any thing is appreciated according to its intrinsic value. Long before the dawn of reason and reflection, associations are formed in the minds of children, of happiness, of elegance, of gayety, of spirit, of fashion, of sensibility, as connected with particular pursuits or amusements, sometimes with particular animal gratifications. And it is a melancholy truth to add, that by such casual associations the choice of most individuals is determined, and the destiny of their lives decided.

Such associations, however, are not always a source of suffering. On the contrary, they often add much to the happiness of human life. With what satisfaction does the soldier submit to the hardships of his profession, who superadds to a sense of duty the enthusiasm which arises from the classical recollections of Greece and Rome, in comparison of *him* whose mind never wanders from the scenes and occupations which press upon his senses! Even the most trifling occurrences of the most common situation;—the insignificant objects which are scattered over the waste of human life, are embellished to those whose minds are stored with fortunate associations, with charms which are as inconceivable to the bulk of mankind as the raptures with which the poet surveys the face of Nature are to the tradesman and the peasant. This does not render the pleasures of life less *real*. On the contrary, it adds infinitely to their amount, and furnishes one of the strong-

est evidences of benevolent design in the Author of our Constitution.

The great object of education ought to be, not to counteract this tendency to association, but to give it a proper direction,—not to limit our enjoyment in every particular to the mere physical gratification, but to connect pleasing associations as far as possible with objects and events which it is in the power of all men to command—with the faithful and conscientious discharge of our duties, with the pursuits of science, and with those beauties of nature which are open to all.

"Associations of this kind," as Mr. Alison well remarks, "when acquired in early life, are seldom altogether lost; and whatever inconveniences they may sometimes have with respect to the general character, or however much they may be ridiculed by those who do not experience them, they are yet productive to those who possess them of a perpetual and innocent delight. Nature herself is their friend. In her most dreadful as well as her most lovely scenes, they can discover something either to elevate their imaginations, or to move their hearts, and amid every change of scenery or of climate, can still find themselves among the early objects of their admiration or their love."

On the proper regulation of this part of our constitution, many valuable remarks are to be found in the writings of the ancient Stoics; among whom, the *χρῆσις οἷα δεῖ φαντασιῶν* was regarded as one of the most important of our concerns in the conduct of life.

Even in those men, however, whose education has not been so systematically conducted, and whose associations have been formed by accident, notwithstanding the many acute sufferings to which they may be exposed, I am persuaded, that (except in some very rare combinations of circumstances) this part of our constitution is a more copious source of pleasure than of pain. After all the complaints that have been made of the peculiar distresses incident to cultivated minds, who would exchange the sensibility of his intellectual and moral being for the apathy of those whose only avenues of pleasure and pain are to be found in their animal na-

ture, who "move thoughtlessly in the narrow circle of their existence, and to whom the falling leaves present no idea but that of approaching winter?" The happiness of such men, it is true, must depend in a great measure on accident; but (such is the wise and gracious arrangement of things) that I am persuaded they are happier, on the whole, than those in whom the lessons of a cold and sceptical philosophy extinguish the glow of hope and fancy, and "freeze the genial current of the soul." I would only except those unfortunate cases where the mind is disordered by a constitutional melancholy, or has been early tinctured with the gloom of a depressing superstition.

I shall conclude these very imperfect hints on a most important subject, with remarking the inefficacy of mere reasoning or argument, in correcting the effects of early impressions and prejudices. More is to be expected from the opposite associations, which may be gradually formed by a new course of studies and of occupations, or by a complete change of scenes, of habits, and of society.

III.

Influence of Opinions on Happiness.

By opinions are here meant, not merely speculative conclusions to which we have given our assent, but convictions which have taken root in the mind, and have an habitual influence on the conduct.

Of these opinions a very great and important part are, in the case of all mankind, interwoven by education with their first habits of thinking, or are insensibly imbibed from the manners of the times.

Where such opinions are erroneous, they may often be corrected to a great degree by the persevering efforts of a reflecting and vigorous mind; but as the number of minds capable of reflection is comparatively small, it becomes a duty on all who have themselves experienced the happy effects of juster and more elevated

principles, to impart, as far as they are able, the same blessing to others. The subject is of too great extent to be here prosecuted; but the reader will find it discussed at great length in a very valuable section of Dr. Ferguson's Principles of Moral and Political Science.*

Of the doctrines contained in this section, the following abstract is given by the same writer in his *Institutes of Moral Philosophy.*

"It is unhappy to lay the pretensions of human nature so low as to check its exertions. The despair of virtue is still more unhappy than the despair of knowledge.

"It is unhappy to entertain notions of what men actually are, so high as, upon trial and disappointment, to run into the opposite extreme of distrust.

"It is unhappy to rest our own choice of good qualities on the supposition, that we are to meet with such qualities in other men; or to apprehend, that want of merit in other men will dispense with that justice or liberality of conduct which we ought to maintain.

"It is unhappy to consider perfection as the standard by which we are to censure others, not as the rule by which we are to conduct ourselves.

"It is a wretched opinion, that happiness consists in a freedom from trouble, or in having nothing to do.

"In consequence of this opinion men complain of what might employ them agreeably. By declining every duty, and every active engagement, they render life a burden, and they complain that it is so. By declining business to go in search of amusement, they reject what is fitted to occupy them, and search in vain for something else to quicken the languor of a vacant mind.

"It is therefore unhappy to entertain an opinion, that any thing can amuse us better than the duties of our station, or than that which we are in the present moment called upon to do.

"It is an unhappy opinion, that beneficence is an effort of self-denial, or that we lay our fellow creatures under great obligations by the kindness we do them.

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* Part ii. chap. i. sect. 8.

"It is an unhappy opinion, that any thing whatever is preferable to happiness.*

* * * * * *

"It is happy," continues the same author, "to value personal qualities above every other consideration, and to state perfection as a guide to ourselves, not as a rule by which to censure others.

"It is happy to rely on what is in our own power; to value the characters of a worthy, benevolent, and strenuous mind, not as a form merely to be observed in our conduct, but as the completion of what we have to wish for in human life, and to consider the debasements of a malicious and cowardly nature as the extreme misery to which we are exposed.

"It is happy to have continually in view that we are members of society, and of the community of mankind; that we are instruments in the hand of God for the good of his creatures; that, if we are ill members of society, or unwilling instruments in the hand of God, we do our utmost to counteract our nature, to quit our station, and to undo ourselves.

"*I am in the station which God has assigned me*, says Epictetus. With this reflection a man may be happy in every station; without it he cannot be happy in any. Is not the appointment of God sufficient to outweigh every other consideration? This rendered the condition of a slave agreeable to Epictetus, and that of a monarch to Antoninus. This consideration renders any situation agreeable to a rational nature, which delights not in partial interests, but in universal good."†

This excellent passage contains a summary of the most valuable principles of the Stoical school. *One* of

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* In illustration of this last remark, Dr. Ferguson quotes in a note the following passage from the Tatler. "There is hardly a man to be found who would not rather be in pain to appear happy, than be really happy to appear miserable."

The author of the Fable of the Bees (see remark *M.*) has also said, "there is nothing so ravishing to the proud," he should have said to the *vain*, "as to be thought happy."

Does not this general anxiety to assume the appearance of happiness proceed from the universal conviction of the connexion between happiness and virtue? By counterfeiting the outward signs of happiness a vain man, without any offensive violation of modesty, lays claim indirectly to all those moral qualities of which happiness is commonly understood to be the fruit and the reward.

† P. 168, *et seq.*

their doctrines, however, I could have wished that Dr. Ferguson had touched upon with his masterly hand; I mean that which relates to the *inconsistencies* which most men fall into in their expectations of happiness, as well as in the estimates they form of the prosperity of others. The following quotation from Epictetus will explain sufficiently the doctrine to which I allude.

"What is more reasonable, than that they who take pains for any thing should get most in that particular for which they take pains? They have taken pains for power, you for right principles; they for riches, you for a proper use of the appearances of things. See whether they have the advantage of you in that for which you have taken pains, and which they neglect. If they are in power and you not, why will you not speak the truth to yourself, that you do nothing for the sake of power, but that they do every thing? No, but since I take care to have right principles, it is more reasonable that I should have power? Yes, in respect to what you take care about, your principles. But give up to others the things in which they have taken more care than you. Else it is just as if, because you have right principles, you should think it fit that when you shoot an arrow you should hit the mark better than an archer, or that you should forge better than a smith." *

Upon the foregoing passage a very ingenious and elegant writer, Mrs. Barbauld, has written a commentary so full of good sense and of important practical morality, that I am sure I run no hazard of trespassing on the patience of the reader by the length of the following extracts.

"As most of the unhappiness in the world arises rather from disappointed desires, than from positive evil, it is of the utmost consequence to attain just notions of the laws and order of the universe, that we may not vex ourselves with fruitless wishes, or give way to groundless and unreasonable discontent. * * * We should consider this world as a great mart of commerce, where fortune exposes to our view various commodi-

* Mrs. Carter's Translation of Epictetus.

ties, riches, ease, tranquillity, fame, integrity, knowledge. Every thing is marked at a settled price. Our time, our labor, our ingenuity, is so much ready money, which we are to lay out to the best advantage. Examine, compare, choose, reject; but stand to your own judgment, and do not, like children, when you have purchased one thing, repine that you do not possess another which you did not purchase. Such is the force of well regulated industry, that a steady and vigorous exertion of our faculties, directed to one end, will generally ensure success. Would you, for instance, be rich? Do you think that single point worth the sacrificing every thing else to? You may then be rich. Thousands have become so from the lowest beginnings, from toil and patient diligence, and attention to the minutest articles of expense and profit. But you must give up the pleasures of leisure, of a vacant mind, of a free unsuspicious temper. If you preserve your integrity, it must be a coarse spun and vulgar honesty. Those high and lofty notions of morals which you brought with you from the schools must be considerably lowered, and mixed with the baser alloy of a jealous and worldly-minded prudence. You must learn to do hard, if not unjust things; and for the nice embarrassments of a delicate and ingenuous spirit, it is necessary for you to get rid of them as fast as possible. You must shut your heart against the muses, and be content to feed your understanding with plain household truths. In short, you must not attempt to enlarge your ideas, or polish your taste, or refine your sentiments, but must keep on in one beaten track, without turning aside either to the right hand or to the left. 'But I cannot submit to drudgery like this. I feel a spirit above it.' 'T is well; be above it then; only do not repine that you are not rich.

"Is knowledge the pearl of price? That too may be purchased—by steady application, and long solitary hours of study and reflection. Bestow these and you shall be wise. 'But', says the man of letters, 'what a hardship is it that many who are grossly illiterate shall raise a fortune and make a figure, while I have little

more than the common conveniences of life.' *Et tibi magna satis!* Was it in order to raise a fortune that you consumed the sprightly hours of youth in study and retirement? Was it to be rich that you grew pale over the midnight lamp, and distilled the sweetness from the Greek and Roman spring? You have then mistaken your path, and ill employed your industry. 'What reward have I then for all my labors?' What reward! A large comprehensive soul, well purged from vulgar fears, and perturbations, and prejudices; able to comprehend and interpret the works of man and of God. A rich, flourishing, cultivated mind, pregnant with inexhaustible stores of entertainment and reflection. A perpetual spring of fresh ideas; and the conscious dignity of superior intelligence. Good heaven! and what reward can you ask besides!

"'But is it not some reproach upon the economy of Providence that such a one, who is a mean dirty fellow, should have amassed wealth enough to buy half a nation?' Not in the least. He made himself a mean dirty fellow for that very end. He has paid his health, his conscience, his liberty for it, and will you envy him his bargain? Will you hang your head and blush in his presence because he outshines you in equipage and show? Lift up your brow with a noble confidence, and say to yourself, 'I have not these things, it is true; but it is because I have not sought,—because I have not desired them,—it is because I possess something better. I have chosen my lot,—I am content and satisfied.'

* * * *

"I much admire the spirit of the ancient philosophers, in that they never attempted, as our moralists often do, to lower the tone of philosophy, and make it consistent with all the indulgences of indolence and sensuality. They never thought of having the bulk of mankind for their disciples; but kept themselves as distinct as possible from a worldly life. They plainly told men what sacrifices were required, and what advantages they were which might be expected.

'Si virtus hoc una potest dare, fortis omissis
Hoc age deliciis.' ————

"If you would be a philosopher, these are the terms. You must do thus and thus: There is no other way. If not, go and be one of the vulgar."

IV.

Influence of Habits on Happiness.

THE effect of habit in reconciling our minds to the inconveniences of our situation was formerly remarked, and an argument was drawn from it in proof of the goodness of our Creator; who, besides making so rich a provision of objects suited to the principles of our nature, has thus bestowed on us a power of accommodation to external circumstances, which these principles teach us to avoid.

This tendency of the mind, however, to adapt itself to the objects with which it is familiarly conversant, may, in some instances, not only be a source of occasional suffering, but may disqualify us for relishing the best enjoyments which human life affords. The habits contracted during infancy and childhood are so much more inveterate than those of our maturer years, that they have been justly said to constitute a second nature; and if, unfortunately, they have been formed amidst circumstances over which we have no control, they leave us no security for our happiness but the caprice of fortune.

To habituate the minds of children to those occupations and enjoyments alone, which it is in the power of an individual at all times to command, is the most solid foundation that can be laid for their future tranquillity. These, too, are the occupations and enjoyments which afford the most genuine and substantial satisfaction; and if education were judiciously employed to second in this respect the recommendations of nature, they might appropriate to themselves all the borrowed charms which the vanities of the world derive from casual associations.

With respect to pursuits which depend, in the first

instance, on our own choice, it is of the last importance for us to keep constantly in view how much of the happiness of mankind arises from habit, and in the formation of our plans to disregard those prepossessions and prejudices which so often warp the judgment in the conduct of life. "Choose that course of action," said Pythagoras, "which is best, and custom will soon render it the most agreeable."

To these very slight hints concerning the regulation of the habits, I shall add a few observations of Dr. Paley's, which appear to me to be solid and judicious, and which afford a favorable specimen of that talent for familiar and happy illustration for which this very popular writer has been so justly celebrated.

"The art in which the secret of human happiness in a great measure consists, is to *set* the habits in such a manner, that every change may be a change for the better. The habits themselves are much the same; for whatever is made habitual becomes smooth and easy, and nearly indifferent. The return to an old habit is likewise easy, whatever the habit be. Therefore the advantage is with those habits which allow of indulgence in the deviation from them. The luxurious receive no greater pleasure from their dainties than the peasant does from his bread and cheese; but the peasant, whenever he goes abroad, finds *a feast*, whereas the Epicure must be well entertained to escape disgust. Those who spend every day at cards, and those who go every day to plough, pass their time much alike; intent upon what they are about, wanting nothing, regretting nothing, they are both for the time in a state of ease; but then whatever suspends the occupation of the card-player distresses him; whereas to the laborer every interruption is a refreshment: and this appears in the different effect that *Sunday* produces on the two, which proves a day of recreation to the one, but a lamentable burden to the other. The man who has learned to live alone feels his spirits enlivened whenever he enters into company, and takes his leave without regret. Another who has long been accustomed to a crowd, experiences in company no elevation of spirits,

nor any greater satisfaction than what the man of a retired life finds in his chimney corner. So far their conditions are equal; but let a change of place, fortune, or situation separate the companion from his circle, his visitors, his club, common room, or coffee house, and the difference of advantage in the choice and constitution of the two habits will show itself. Solitude comes to the one clothed with melancholy; to the other it brings liberty and quiet. You will see the one fretful and restless; at a loss how to dispose of his time till the hour come round that he can forget himself in bed; the other easy and satisfied, taking up his book or his pipe as soon as he finds himself alone; ready to admit any little amusement that casts up, or to turn his hands and attention to the first business that presents itself; or, content without either, to sit still and let his trains of thought glide indolently through his brain, without much use, perhaps, or pleasure, but without *hankering* after any thing better, and without irritation. A reader who has inured himself to books of science and argumentation, if a novel, a well written pamphlet, an article of news, a narrative of a curious voyage, or the journal of a traveller comes in his way, sits down to the repast with relish; enjoys his entertainment while it lasts, and can return when it is over to his graver reading without distaste. Another, with whom nothing will go down but works of humor and pleasantry, or whose curiosity must be interested by perpetual novelty, will consume a bookseller's window in half a forenoon, during which time he is rather in search of diversion than diverted; and as books to his taste are few and short, and rapidly read over, the stock is soon exhausted, when he is left without resource from this principal supply of harmless amusement."

As a supplement to the remarks of Paley, I shall quote a short passage from Montaigne, containing an observation relative to the same subject; which, although stated in a form rather unqualified, seems to me highly worthy of attention. "We must not rivet ourselves so fast to our humors and complexions. Our chief business is to know how to apply ourselves to various cus-

toms. For a man to keep himself tied and bound by necessity to *one* only course, is but bare existence, not living. It was an honorable character of the elder Cato, ('huic versatile ingenium sic pariter ad omnia fuit, ut natum ad id unum diceres, quodcunque ageret.') 'So versatile was his genius, that whatever he took in hand, you would be apt to say that he was formed for that very thing only.' * Were I to choose for myself, there is no fashion so good that I should care to be so wedded to it as not to have it in my power to disengage myself from it. Life is a motion, uneven, irregular, and ever varying its direction. A man is not his own friend, much less his own master, but rather a slave to himself, who is eternally pursuing his own humor, and such a bigot to his own inclinations, that he is not able to abandon or to alter them." †

The only thing to be censured in this passage is, that the author makes no distinction between *good* and *bad* habits; between those which we are induced to cultivate by reason, and by the original principles of our nature; and those which reason admonishes us to shun, on account of the mischievous consequences with which they are likely to be followed. With respect to these two classes of habits considered in contrast with each other, it is extremely worthy of observation, that the former are incomparably more easy in the acquisition than the latter; while the latter, when once acquired, are (probably in consequence of this very circumstance, the difficulty of overcoming our natural propensities) of at least equal efficacy in subjecting all the powers of the will to their dominion.

That such habits as are reasonable and agreeable to nature are more easily acquired than others of a contrary description, is an old and common remark. It is well expressed, and very happily illustrated in the following passage of Quinctilian. "The discipline of a virtuous and happy life is short and easy, nature having formed us for whatever is excellent, and having so facilitated to a willing mind every acquisition which tends

* Liv. lib. xxxix. c. 40. † Montaigne, b. iii. c. 3. Cotton's Translation.

to its improvement, as to render it wonderful that vice should be so prevalent in the world. For as to fishes, water is the appropriate element; to terrestrial animals, the dry land; and to birds, the surrounding atmosphere; so to man it is certainly more easy to follow the suggestions of *Nature* than to pursue a plan of life contrary to her obvious intentions and arrangements." *

Of the peculiar difficulty of shaking off such inveterate habits, as were at first the most repugnant to our taste and inclinations, we have a daily and a melancholy proof in the case of those individuals who have suffered themselves to become slaves to tobacco, to opium, and to other intoxicating drugs, which, so far from possessing the attractions of pleasurable sensations, are in a great degree revolting to an unvitiated palate. The same thing is exemplified in many of those *acquired tastes* which it is the great object of the art of cookery to create and gratify; and still more remarkably in those fatal habits which sometimes steal on the most amiable characters, under the seducing form of social enjoyment, and of a temporary respite from the evils of life.

I am inclined, however, to think that Montaigne meant to restrict his observations chiefly, if not solely, to habits which are indifferent or nearly indifferent in their *moral* tendency, and that all he is to be understood as asserting amounts to this, that we ought not, in matters connected with the *accommodations* of human life, to enslave ourselves to one set of habits in preference to another. In this sense his doctrine is just and important; and I have only to add to it, that in *this* point of view also virtuous habits possess a distinguished superiority not only over those which are immoral, but over those which are merely innocent or inoffensive, inasmuch as they lead us to associate the idea of happiness with objects which depend infinitely less than any others on the caprice of fortune, or rather with such as

* "Brevis est institutio vitæ honestæ beatæque. Natura enim nos ad mentem optimam genuit: adeoque discere meliora volentibus promptum est, ut verè intuenti mirum sit illud magis, malos esse tam multos. Nam ut aqua piscibus, ut sicca terrenis, circumfusus nobis spiritus volucribus convenit, ita certè facilius esse oportebat secundum naturam, quàm contra eam vivere."—*Quinct.* lib. xii. c. 11.

every wise and prudent man has it in his power at all times to enjoy. This observation I had occasion to illustrate formerly, when treating of the leading Principles of the Stoical Philosophy.

SECTION IV.

Continuation of the same Subject.

THE foregoing remarks relate to what may be called the essentials of happiness;—the circumstances which constitute the general state or habit of mind that is necessary to lay a ground work for every other enjoyment.

This foundation being supposed, the sum of happiness enjoyed by an individual will be proportioned to the degree in which he is able to secure all the various pleasures belonging to our nature.

The most important of these pleasures may be referred to the following heads:—

1. The Pleasures of Activity and of Repose.
2. The Pleasures of Sense.
3. The Pleasures of Imagination.
4. The Pleasures of the Understanding.
5. The Pleasures of the Heart.*

An examination and comparison of these different classes of our enjoyments is necessary, even on the Stoical principles, to complete the inquiry concerning happiness, in order to ascertain the relative value of the different objects of choice and rejection.

Such an examination, however, would lead into details inconsistent with the plan, and foreign to the design of this work. To those who choose to prosecute the subject, it opens a field of speculation equally curious and useful, and much less exhausted by moralists than might have been expected from its importance. The following slight hints will be sufficient to justify the classification now mentioned, and may perhaps suggest some useful practical reflections.

* To make the enumeration more complete, I might have added the Pleasures of Taste; but as these are confined to a comparatively small number of the species, they did not seem to require a particular consideration at present.

I.

Pleasures of Activity and of Repose.

I observed before, in treating of our Active Powers, that our occasional propensities to Action and to Repose are in some respects analogous to our bodily appetites. They are common, too, like *them*, to man and to the brutes; for every animal we know is prompted by an instinctive impulse to take that degree of exercise which is conducive to health and vigor, and is prevented from passing the bounds of moderation, by that languor and desire of repose which are consequences of continued exertion.

A fact perfectly similar to this takes place with respect to the mind. We are impelled by nature to the exercise of its different faculties, and we are warned, when we are in danger of overstraining them, by a consciousness of fatigue. In both cases there is a pleasure annexed to the *exercise* of our powers; and this pleasure seems to be an ultimate fact in our constitution, not resolvable into any more simple or general source of enjoyment. If I were disposed to suspect the possibility of any such reference, it would be to the pleasure arising from the consciousness of *power*, of which I treated formerly, when considering our Natural Desires. But although these pleasures are commonly so blended together, that it is difficult to discriminate them, it might be clearly shown, (if it were worth while to enter into the metaphysical discussion,) that they have each their distinct origin in our frame. As the view of the subject, however, which I mean to take at present is entirely practical, I do not think it necessary for me to attempt drawing the line between two classes of enjoyment so very nearly allied; and it is for the same reason that I have avoided lengthening the enumeration, by stating the pleasures of *power* as a separate article, the distinction between these and the pleasures of *activity* being too subtle and refined to strike the generality of readers without a commentary.

It is not only with the pleasures of *power* that those of *activity* may be united. They blend also with all the various pleasures of sense, of the imagination, of the understanding, and of the heart; and it is owing to the different effects of these combinations that some kinds of activity are more delightful than others. And as the pleasures of activity are heightened by their union with other gratifications, so a certain mixture of activity is necessary to give a zest to every other enjoyment, or at least to prevent them from ending in languor and satiety. Hence the satisfaction with which we may continue to enjoy the pleasures of the understanding during a length of time, to which it is impossible, by any artifice, to extend the more passive gratifications of the senses or of the imagination,—an important circumstance in our constitution, which I shall afterwards illustrate more fully.

As I made several observations on the pleasures of activity, when attempting to reconcile the physical evils in the condition of man with a beneficent intention in the Author of his being, I shall not enlarge further on that topic at present. The reasonings that were then stated, were, I flatter myself, sufficient to authorize the general conclusion, that those very circumstances in the order of Providence, on which gloomy moralists have founded their complaints, are impressed with the strongest marks of beneficent wisdom. That, during our progress through life, we are destined never to arrive at the completion of our desires, but to be invited from stage to stage, by one phantom of hope succeeding to another, is obviously a necessary part of that constitution of things which appointed constant activity to be an essential ingredient in human happiness.

Of these pleasures of *activity* which invite man during the period of his vigor to a continued course of exertion, either of body or mind, the pleasures of *repose* may be considered as, in our present state of imperfection, a natural and a necessary consequence. They presuppose a *general* state of activity, without which they can hardly be said to have any existence, and for re-

suming which they prepare and invigorate the mind, as sleep prepares and disposes us for entering on the duties of our waking hours. In this way they contribute not inconsiderably from the beginning to the close of life to diversify and to increase the sum of our enjoyments; but they constitute in a still more essential manner, as Dr. Paley has remarked, the supreme and the appropriate happiness of *old age*.

"It is not for youth alone," says this pleasing writer, "that the Great Parent of Creation hath provided. Happiness is found in the arm-chair of dozing age, as well as in either the sprightliness of the dance or the animation of the chase. To novelty, to acuteness of sensation, to hope, to ardor of pursuit, succeeds, what is in no inconsiderable a degree an equivalent for them all,—'perception of ease.' Herein is the exact difference between the young and the old. The young are not happy but when enjoying pleasure; the old are happy when free from pain. And this constitution suits with the degrees of animal power which they respectively possess. The vigor of youth was to be stimulated to action by impatience of rest; whilst, to the imbecility of age, quietness and repose become positive gratifications. This same perception of ease oftentimes renders old age a condition of great comfort, especially when riding at its anchor after a busy or tempestuous life. It is well described by Rousseau, to be the interval of repose between the hurry and the end of life." *

To this passage from Dr. Paley, I shall subjoin an extract from a very different writer, M. Diderot,—an author of unquestionable eloquence and ingenuity, but who unfortunately has not always employed his great talents for the best purposes. The passage which I am to quote is, I think, far from being unexceptionable in point of sound philosophy, inasmuch as it seems to ascribe to a state of *repose* a positive and appropriate pleasure, independently of any reference to the lassitude produced by a former state of exertion. It is at the same time, in my opinion, highly exceptionable in

* Natural Theology, pp. 493, 494.

point of good taste; and may perhaps be produced without much injustice as a fair specimen of that false refinement, both in thought and in expression, which was fashionable among other philosophers of the same school.

"He alone has experienced the ineffable charm of a *delicious repose*, whose organs were sensible and delicate; who received from nature a soul that was tender and a frame that was voluptuous; who enjoyed perfect health; who was in the flower of his years; whose mind was overcast with no cloud, whose heart was agitated by no keen emotion; who, after the fatigue of some gentle exertion, felt, in all the parts of his frame, a pleasure so equally diffused, that he was unconscious of any local sensation. In that moment of relaxation and enchantment, no memory remained with him of the past, no desire of the future, no anxiety about the present. The flight of time was unperceived; for his happiness flowed from himself, and seemed part of his being. By an imperceptible movement he was tending towards sleep; but during the slow and insensible transition, while all his powers were sinking, he was still enough awake to enjoy the delights of his existence; an enjoyment, however, altogether passive, which excited no attachment to itself,—suggested no matter for reflection,—was accompanied with no sentiment of self-congratulation. If it were possible to form a steady conception of this situation so wholly sensitive, where all the faculties of mind and of body are alive without being in action, and to attach to this *delicious quietism* the idea of immutability, a notion would be formed of the highest and purest happiness that the mind of man is able to imagine." *

* Encyclopédie, Art. *Délicieux*.

I recollect to have heard somewhat more than forty years ago, at the time when Diderot's reputation was at its highest point in his own country, this passage quoted by some of his Parisian friends and admirers, as one of the richest gems to be found in his writings. That it was considered as such by himself I have no doubt, not only from the scrupulous care with which he has evidently weighed every expression it contains, but from the circumstance of his giving a place in this magnificent work to so unmeaning an article. Nothing but the overweening partiality of an author could have induced Diderot to introduce into a book of science such a comment consisting of mere *verbiage*, upon the import of a word which stood in need of no explanation. I subjoin the original at length as a sort of literary curiosity.

As these dreams, however, of an Epicurean happiness are but too flattering to the romantic indolence of youthful minds, it may be useful to refer the reader, (for the passage is much too long for a quotation,) to another picture drawn by a still superior hand; and (what is of still greater consequence,) a picture copied faithfully after nature. I allude to the truly eloquent description given by Gibbon of the primitive monks,—a set of men whose notions of the Sovereign Good were certainly very different from those of Diderot, but whose melancholy history affords an instructive lesson to *all* who search for happiness in a total exemption from labor, both of body and mind. In this unnatural state, not even the prospect of lasting bliss beyond the grave was able long to support the alacrity of the spirits, or to ward off those miseries which habits of solitary inaction entail on the imagination. "The vacant hours of the monk," says Gibbon, "heavily rolled along without business or pleasure, and before the close of each day he had repeatedly cursed the tedious progress of the sun." * The whole of the passage may be perused

"*Délicieux*: le terme est propre à l'organe du goût; nous disons d'un mets, d'un vin, qu'il est *délicieux*, lorsque le palais en est flatté le plus agréablement qu'il est possible. Le *délicieux* est le plaisir extrême de la sensation du goût. On a généralisé son acception, et l'on a dit d'un séjour qu'il est *délicieux*, lorsque tous les objets qu'on y rencontre réveillent les idées les plus douces, ou excitent les sensations les plus agréables. Le suave extrême est les *délicieux* des odeurs. Le repos a aussi son *délice*. Mais qu'est-ce qu'un *repos délicieux?* Celui-là seul en a connu le charme inexprimable, dont les organes étoient sensibles et délicats; qui avoit reçu de la nature une âme tendre et un tempérament voluptueux; qui jouissoit d'une santé parfaite; qui se trouvoit à la fleur de son âge; qui n'avoit l'esprit troublé d'aucun nuage, l'âme agitée d'aucune émotion trop vive; qui sortoit d'une fatigue douce et légère, et qui éprouvoit dans toutes les parties de son corps un plaisir si également répandu, qu'il ne se faisoit distinguer dans aucune. Il ne lui restoit dans ce moment d'enchantement et de foiblesse, ni mémoire du passé, ni désir de l'avenir, ni inquiétude sur le présent. Le tems avoit cessé de couler pour lui, parce qu'il existoit tout en lui-même; le sentiment de son bonheur ne s'affoiblissoit qu'avec celui de son existence. Il passoit par un mouvement imperceptible, de la veille au sommeil; mais sur ce passage imperceptible, au milieu de la défaillance de toutes ses facultés, il veilloit encore assez, sinon pour penser à quelque chose de distinct, du moins pour sentir toute la douceur de son existence: Mais il en jouissoit d'une jouissance tout-à-fait passive, sans y être attaché, sans y réflechir, sans s'en réjouir, sans s'en féliciter;—si l'on pouvoit fixer par la pensée cette situation de pur sentiment, où toutes les facultés du corps et de l'âme sont vivantes sans être agissantes, et attacher à ce quiétisme délicieux l'idée d'immutabilité, on se formeroit la notion du bonheur le plus grand et le plus pur que l'homme puisse imaginer."

If the reader is desirous to see a longer and still more elaborate specimen of the same sort of writing by the same hand, he may turn to the article *Jouissance*, in the Encyclopédie.

* Decline and Fall, &c. Vol. VI. p. 262; Ed. of 1792.

with much advantage; and abundantly justifies an assertion of Dr. Ferguson's, that even the complaints of the *sufferer* are not so sure a mark of misery as the stare of the *languid.**

II.

Pleasures of Sense.

I mentioned, in the second place, the Pleasures of *Sense;* another class of our enjoyments which is common to man and to the brutes; and which, notwithstanding the space they occupy in the imagination of most men, must be allowed to stand at the very bottom of the scale, whether we regard them in connexion with the nobler principles of our nature, or estimate their value from the accession they bring to the sum of our happiness. When I say this I would not be understood to dispute the real and substantial addition which they make to our happiness, in so far as it is in our power to command them. I would only observe, that their intensity is in general greatly overrated, in consequence of certain accessory pleasures of the imagination or of the heart, which are commonly associated with them. By means of these, too, their grossness is kept out of view and they appear with many borrowed attractions to the inexperienced and unsuspecting minds of youth. No epicure is to be found who will openly plead the cause of private and solitary sensuality; or who will maintain that our animal gratifications would form an important part of human happiness, if divested of those recommendations which they derive from the fancy, and from the social enjoyments with which they are blended.

But whatever may be the intensity and the value of these pleasures during the time we enjoy them, it is altogether impossible to make them fill up any considerable portion of human life. Their province is circum-

* Essay on the History of Civil Society, Part i. sect. 7.

scribed by nature within very narrow bounds, and every attempt to extend these frustrates its own purpose. It does not appear, therefore, that nature intended that the pursuit of them should be considered as a serious or important object; and, indeed, wherever this is suffered to take place it is at the expense of all the worthier principles of our constitution. Health, and fortune, and fame, seldom fail to fall sacrifices in the progress of the evil, which, in its last stage, destroys the intellectual powers and the moral sensibilities, and produces a languor and depression of mind which is the completion of human misery.

To all this it may be added, that the pleasures of sense are confined to the very moment of gratification, affording no satisfaction in the retrospect, like that which follows our intellectual exertions, and still more our good actions.

The result of these observations is, *not* that the pleasures of sense are unworthy the regard of a wise man, but that they should be confined within those limits which are marked out by the obvious intentions of nature. That they are to be enjoyed in the greatest perfection in a life of virtue, we have the testimony of Epicurus himself; according to whose system prudence, temperance, and the other virtues, derive all their value from their tendency to increase the sum of bodily enjoyment, and to lessen that of bodily suffering,—a most erroneous and absurd doctrine undoubtedly, when considered in connexion with the theory of morals, but highly interesting in a *practical* light, as an acknowledgment from the professed votaries of pleasure, that a life of virtue (even if our views did not extend beyond the present scene) is the truest wisdom.

III.

Pleasures of the Imagination.

The pleasures of the *Imagination* are unquestionably of a higher rank than those of *Sense*, and may be pro-

tracted to a much longer period without any danger of injuring the health, or of impairing the faculties, or of exhausting that inestimable fund of constitutional enjoyment, which we commonly express by the phrase *animal spirits*. On the contrary, they have a tendency to raise the taste above the grossness of sensuality, and to diminish the temptation to vicious indulgences, by furnishing agreeable and innocent resources for filling up the blanks of life. By supplying us, too, with pleasures more refined than those the senses afford, they gradually prepare us for the still higher enjoyments which belong to us as rational and moral beings; and indeed, when properly regulated, they may be rendered subservient, in a high degree, both to our intellectual and moral improvement.

Even to this class of our pleasures, however, certain limits are prescribed by nature; for although in enjoying them the mind is not quite so passive as in receiving the gratifications of sense, yet many of its most important principles are left wholly unemployed; and accordingly, when they are prolonged beyond their due bounds, we lose all relish for them, and feel a desire of more active and more interesting engagements. I shall not insist at present on the effects which result to the moral character from an excessive indulgence in the pleasures of the imagination, in consequence of their tendency to unfit us for action, and to give us a disrelish for real life, as my object in these observations is merely to consider them as sources of enjoyment. I have treated besides of this subject at some length in the first volume of the Philosophy of the Human Mind.

IV.

Pleasures of the Understanding.

The Pleasures which I have referred to the *Understanding* might perhaps have been characterized more explicitly, "as pleasures arising from the exercise of our reasoning and of our inventive powers." Of this kind

is the pleasure of *investigation* (which resolves partly into the pleasure of activity, partly into that resulting from the employment of skill, partly into that arising from expectation and hope, or, in other words, from the anticipation of discovery.) 2. The pleasure of *generalization*, or of rising from particular truths to comprehensive theorems,—a process which, beside the satisfaction it yields by the relief it brings to the memory, communicates to us a sentiment of our intellectual power, by subjecting completely to our command a mass of information which before only served to distract our attention and to oppress our faculties. 3. To all this we may add, the pleasure resulting from the gratification of *curiosity*, and from the discovery of *truth*, of which I had formerly occasion to treat under the article of the Active Powers. With these pleasures, too, which are peculiar to the understanding, various accessory ones are combined; the pleasure (for example) of extensive utility, when our studies happen to be directed to objects interesting to mankind; the pleasure arising from the gratification of ambition; and the social satisfaction of communicating our knowledge to others. Perhaps, however, the principal recommendation of this class of our pleasures is derived from the constant and inexhaustible resources they supply to the mind in its progress through life. In this respect they possess many advantages over the pleasures of imagination; not only as they depend much less on the state of the spirits, but as they may be extended to a much longer period without satiety or a desire of change, and are frequently enjoyed with increasing relish in old age; while, on the other hand, the objects which interest the imagination gradually lose their charms when we begin to engage in the business of the world, and furnish at best but an amusement and relaxation to diversify our habitual and more serious occupations. Upon the whole, among the various *subordinate* pursuits to which men are led to devote themselves by inclination or taste, (I say *subordinate*, for I do not speak at present of our moral duties) a turn for science may be safely pronounced to be the happiest of any; and *that* which we may venture with

the greatest confidence to recommend to youth as the most solid foundation for the future comfort of their lives; more particularly when we consider how very little the pleasures of the understanding depend on external circumstances, and on the caprice of fortune. The happiest individuals certainly whom I have happened to know have been men, who, with a due relish for the pleasures of imagination, have devoted themselves steadily and ardently to philosophical pursuits, and more particularly to the study of the severer sciences.

V.

Pleasures of the Heart.

Under this title I comprehend the Pleasures of Benevolence, of Friendship, of Love, of Pity, of enjoying the Favor and Esteem of others, and above all, the pleasure resulting from the consciousness of doing our Duty; the purest and most exquisite enjoyments undoubtedly of which we have any experience; and which, by blending in one way or other with our other gratifications, impart to them their principal charm. This has been often remarked with respect to the pleasures of sense; and the same remark may be extended to the pleasures of activity and of the understanding.

The practical conclusion resulting from the inquiry is, that the wisest plan of economy, with respect to our pleasures, is not merely compatible with a strict observance of the rules of morality, but is, in a great measure, comprehended in these rules; and therefore, that the happiness, as well as the perfection of our nature, consists in doing our duty with as little solicitude about the event as is consistent with the weakness of humanity. Nothing is indeed more remarkable in this view of human nature than the tendency of virtuous habits to systematize the conduct for the purpose of happiness, and to open up all the various sources of enjoyment in our constitution without suffering any one to encroach upon

the rest. They establish a proper balance among our different principles of action, and by doing so produce a greater sum of enjoyment on the whole, than we could have obtained by allowing any one in particular to gain an ascendant over our conduct. It was from a mistaken view of this very important fact that the Epicurean system of old arose, as well as those modern theories which represent *virtue* as only a different name for rational *self-love*. They indeed coincide so wonderfully together, as to illustrate, in the most striking manner, the *unity* as well as the *beneficence* of design in the human constitution. But still, (as I before remarked) notwithstanding these happy effects of a virtuous life, the principle of duty, and the desire of happiness are radically distinct from each other. The peace of mind, indeed, which is the immediate reward of good actions, and the sense of merit with which they are accompanied, create, independently of experience, a very strong presumption in favor of the connexion between happiness and virtue; but the facts in human life which justify this conclusion are not obvious to careless spectators; nor would philosophers in every age have agreed so unanimously in adopting it, if they had not been led to the truth by a shorter and more direct process, than an examination of the remote concequences of virtuous and of vicious conduct.

To this observation it may be added, that if the desire of happiness were the sole, or even the ruling principle of action in a good man, it could scarcely fail to frustrate its own object, by filling his mind with anxious conjectures about futurity, and with perplexing calculations of the various chances of good and evil; whereas he, whose ruling principle of action is a sense of duty, conducts himself in the business of life with boldness, consistency and dignity; and finds himself rewarded by that happiness which so often eludes the pursuit of those who exert every faculty of the mind in order to attain it.

CHAPTER FIFTH.

SECTION I.

Of the different Theories which have been formed concerning the Object of Moral Approbation.

It was before remarked, that the different theories of Virtue which have prevailed in modern times have arisen chiefly from attempts to trace all the branches of our duty to one principle of action; such as a rational self-love, benevolence, justice, or a disposition to obey the will of God.

That none of these theories is agreeable to fact may be collected from the reasonings which have been already stated. The harmony, however, which exists among our various good dispositions, and their general coincidence in determining us to the same course of life, bestows on all of them, when skilfully proposed, a certain degree of plausibility.

The systematical spirit from which they have taken their rise, although a fertile source of error, has not been without its use; inasmuch as it has roused the attention of ingenious men to the most important of all studies, that of the end and destination of human life. The facility, at the same time, with which so great a variety of consequences may all be traced from distinct principles, affords a demonstration of that unity and consistency of design, which is still more conspicuous in the moral than in the material world.

SECTION II.

Of the General Definition of Virtue.

Having taken a cursory survey of the chief branches of our Duty, we are prepared to enter on the general question concerning the *Nature and Essence of Virtue.*

In fixing on the arrangement of this part of my subject, it appeared to me more agreeable to the established rules of philosophizing, to consider, first, our duties in detail; and after having thus laid a solid foundation in the way of analysis, to attempt to rise to the *general idea* in which all our duties concur, than to circumscribe our inquiries, at our first outset, within the limits of an arbitrary and partial definition. What I have now to offer, therefore, will consist of little more than some obvious and necessary consequences from principles which have been already stated.

The various duties which have been considered all agree with each other in one common quality, that of being *obligatory* on rational and voluntary agents; and they are all enjoined by the same authority,—*the authority of conscience.* These duties, therefore, are but different articles of *one law,* which is properly expressed by the word *virtue.*

An observation to the same purpose is put into the mouth of Socrates by Plato. "So likewise concerning the virtues; though they are many and various, there is one common idea belonging to them all, by which they are virtues." *Οὕτω δὴ καὶ περὶ τῶν ἀρετῶν, κἂν εἰ πολλαὶ καὶ παντοδαπαί εἰσιν, ἓν δέ τι εἶδος ταὐτὸν ἅπασαι ἔχουσι δι' ὃ εἰσὶν ἀρεταί.**

As all the virtues are enjoined by the same authority (the authority of conscience), the man whose ruling principle of action is a sense of duty, will observe all the different virtues with the same reverence and the same zeal. He who lives in the *habitual* neglect of any one of them shows plainly, that where his conduct happens to coincide with what the rules of morality prescribe, it is owing merely to an accidental agreement between his duty and his inclination; and that he is not actuated by that motive which can alone render our conduct meritorious. It is justly said, therefore, that to live in the habitual practice of any one vice, is to throw off our allegiance to conscience and to our Maker, as decidedly as if we had violated all the rules which duty

* Plato in Men. Ed. Serr. Tom. II. p. 72.

prescribes; and it is in this sense, I presume, that we ought to interpret that passage of the Sacred Writings, in which it is said, "*He who keepeth the whole law, and offendeth in one point, is guilty of all.*"

The word *virtue*, however, (as I shall have occasion to remark more particularly in the next section) is applied not only to express a particular course of external conduct, but to express *a particular species or description of human character.* When so applied, it seems properly to denote a *habit* of mind, as distinguished from *occasional acts* of duty. It was formerly said that the characters of men receive their denominations of covetous, voluptuous, ambitious, &c. from the particular active principle which prevailingly influences the conduct. A man, accordingly, whose ruling or habitual principle of action is a sense of duty, or a regard to what is right, may be properly denominated virtuous. Agreeably to this view of the subject, the ancient Pythagoreans defined virtue to be "*Ἕξις τοῦ δέοντος,** the oldest definition of virtue of which we have any account, and one of the most unexceptionable which is yet to be found in any system of philosophy.

This account of virtue coincides very nearly with what I conceive to be Dr. Reid's, from some passages in his Essays on the Active Powers of Man. Virtue he seems to consider as consisting "in a fixed purpose or resolution to act according to our sense of duty."

"Suppose a man," says he "to have exercised his intellectual and moral faculties so far as to have distinct notions of justice and injustice, and of the consequences of both, and after due deliberation to have formed a fixed purpose to adhere inflexibly to justice, and never to handle the wages of iniquity:

"Is not this the man whom we should call a just man? We consider the moral virtues as inherent in the mind of a good man, even where there is no opportunity of exercising them. And what is it in the mind which we can call the virtue of justice when it is not exercised? It can be nothing but a fixed purpose or determination

* Gale's Opuscula Mythologica, &c. &c. p. 590.

to act according to the rules of justice when there is opportunity."

With all this I perfectly agree. It is the fixed purpose to do what is *right*, which evidently constitutes what we call *a virtuous disposition*. But it appears to me that virtue, considered as an attribute of character, is more properly defined by the *habit* which the fixed purpose gradually forms, than by the fixed purpose itself. It is from the external habit alone that other men can judge of the purpose; and it is from the uniformity and spontaneity of his habit that the individual himself must judge how far his purposes are sincere and steady.

I have said that this account of *virtue* coincides with the definition of it given by the ancient Pythagoreans; and it also coincides with the opinion of Aristotle, by whom the ethical doctrine of the Pythagoreans was rendered much more complete and satisfactory. According to this philosopher the different virtues are "*practical habits, voluntary in their origin*, and agreeable to right reason." * This last philosopher seems indeed to have considered the subject of *habits* in general more attentively than any other writer of antiquity; and he has suggested some important hints with respect to them, which well deserve the attention of those who may turn their thoughts to this very interesting class of facts in the human constitution.

In referring to these doctrines of the ancient schools, I am far from proceeding on the supposition, that questions of science are to be decided by authority. But I own it always appears to me to afford a strong presumption in favor of any conclusion concerning the principles of human nature, when we find it sanctioned by the judgment of those who have been led to it by separate and independent processes of reasoning. For

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* "Ἕξις προαιρετική—ἐφ' ἡμῖν, καὶ ἑκούσια, &c. (*Aristotle's Ethics*, Book iii. chap. 5.) Immediately after, Aristotle excellently observes, (from an evident anxiety to impress on his readers the necessary dependence of morality on the free agency of man,) "Actions and habits are not precisely in the same sense voluntary; the former are voluntary throughout, from beginning to end; but the beginnings only of habits, which gain force, like maladies, by degrees, until they become irresistible; even these, however, are also voluntary, since their causes were such, namely, the actions by which they were formed."—(*Aristotle's Ethics and Politics, by Dr. Gillies*, Vol. I. p. 308.)

the same reason I think it of consequence to remark the coincidence between the account now given of *Virtue* and that of Mr. Hobbes, one of the most sceptical, but, at the same time, one of the most acute and original of our English metaphysicians. "Virtue," says he, "is the habit of doing according to those laws of Nature that tend to our preservation; and vice is the habit of doing the contrary." The definition indeed is faulty, in so far as it involves the author's selfish theory of morals; but in considering the word *virtue* as expressive of a *habit of action*, it approaches nearer to the truth than the greater part of the definitions of virtue to be found in the writings of the moderns.

These observations lead to an explanation of what has at first sight the appearance of paradox in the ethical doctrines of Aristotle, that where there is self-denial there is no virtue. That the merit of particular actions is increased by the self-denial with which they are accompanied cannot be disputed; but it is only when we are *learning* the practice of our duties that this self-denial is exercised (for the practice of morality, as well as of every thing else, is facilitated by repeated acts;) and therefore, if the word *virtue* be employed to express that *habit* of mind which it is the great object of a good man to confirm, it will follow, that, in proportion as he approaches to it, his efforts of self-denial must diminish, and that all occasion for them would cease if his end were completely attained.

The definition of virtue given by Aristotle, as consisting in "right practical habits *voluntary in their origin*," is well illustrated by what Plutarch has told us of the means by which he acquired the mastery over his irascible passions. "I have always approved," says he, "of the engagements and vows imposed on themselves from motives of religion, by certain philosophers, to abstain from wine, or from some other favorite indulgence, for the space of a year. I have also approved of the determination taken by others not to deviate from the truth, even in the lightest conversation, during a particular period. Comparing my own mind with theirs, and conscious that I yielded to none of them in reverence

for God, I tasked myself, in the first instance not to give way to anger upon any occasion for several days. I afterwards extended this resolution to a month or longer; and having thus made a trial of what I could do, I have learned at length never to speak but with gentleness, and so carefully to watch over my temper as never to purchase the short and unprofitable gratification of venting my resentment at the expense of a lasting and humiliating remorse." *

I must not dismiss this topic without recommending, not merely to the perusal, but to the diligent study of all who have a taste for moral inquiries, Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, in which he has examined, with far greater accuracy than any other author of antiquity, the nature of *habits* considered in their relation to our moral constitution. The whole treatise is indeed of great value, and, with the exception of a few passages, almost justifies the very warm and unqualified eulogium pronounced upon it by a learned divine (Dr. Rennel) before the university of Cambridge,—an eulogium in which he goes so very far as to assert of this work, "that it affords not only the most perfect specimen of scientific morality, but exhibits also the powers of the most compact and best constructed system *which the human intellect ever produced upon any subject;* enlivening occasionally great severity of method, and strict precision of terms, by the sublimest though soberest splendor of diction." †

For the use of *English* readers an excellent translation of Aristotle's *Ethics* and also of his *Politics* has been published by Dr. Gillies; and indeed I do not know of any treatises, among the many remains of antiquity, which could have been selected as a more important accession to the stock of our national literature.

* Plut. de Irâ. † Quoted by Dr. Gillies, Vol. I. p. 527.

SECTION III.

On an Ambiguity in the Words *Right* and *Wrong*, *Virtue* and *Vice*.

THE epithets *right* and *wrong*, *virtuous* and *vicious*, are applied sometimes to *external actions*, and sometimes to the *intentions of the agent*. A similar ambiguity may be remarked in the corresponding words in other languages.

This ambiguity is owing to various causes, which it is not necessary at present to trace. Among other circumstances, it is owing to the association of ideas, which, as it leads us to connect notions of elegance or of meanness with many arbitrary expressions in language, so it often leads us to connect notions of right and wrong with *external actions*, considered abstractly from the motives which produced them. It is owing, (at least in part) to this, that a man who has been involuntarily the author of any calamity to another, can hardly by any reasoning banish his feelings of remorse; and, on the other hand, however wicked our *purposes* may have been, if by any accident we have been prevented from carrying them into execution, we are apt to consider ourselves as far less culpable than if we had perpetrated the crimes that we had intended. It is much in the same manner that we think it less criminal to mislead others by hints, or looks, or actions, than by a verbal lie; and in general, that we think our guilt diminished if we can only contrive to accomplish our ends without employing those external *signs*, or those external *means*, with which we have been accustomed to associate the notions of guilt and infamy. Shakspeare has painted with philosophical accuracy this natural subterfuge of a vicious mind, in which the sense of duty still retains some authority, in one of the exquisite scenes between King John and Hubert:

> "Hadst thou but shook thy head, and made a pause
> When I spake darkly what I purposed;
> Or turn'd an eye of doubt upon my face;
> Or bade me *tell my tale in express words;*
> Deep shame had struck me dumb, made me break off,
> And those thy fears might have wrought fears in me.

But thou didst understand me *by my signs*,
And didst *in signs again parley with sin.*"

As this twofold application of the words *right* and *wrong* to the intentions of the mind, and to external actions, has a tendency, in the common business of life, to affect our opinions concerning the merits of individuals, so it has misled the theoretical speculations of some very eminent philosophers in their inquiries concerning the principles of morals. It was to obviate the confusion of ideas arising from this ambiguity of language that the distinction between *absolute and relative rectitude* was introduced into ethics; and as the distinction is equally just and important, it will be proper to explain it particularly, and to point out its application to one or two of the questions which have been perplexed by that vagueness of expression which it is our object at present to correct.

An action may be said to be absolutely right, when it is in every respect suitable to the circumstances in which the agent is placed; or, in other words, when it is such as, with perfectly good intentions, under the guidance of an enlightened and well informed understanding, he would have performed.

An action may be said to be relatively right, when the intentions of the agent are sincerely good, whether his conduct be suitable to his circumstances or not.

According to these definitions, an action may be right in one sense and wrong in another; an ambiguity in language which, how obvious soever, has not always been attended to by the writers on morals.

It is the relative rectitude of an action which determines the moral desert of the agent; but it is its absolute rectitude which determines its utility to his worldly interests, and to the welfare of society. And it is only so far as absolute and relative rectitude coincide, that utility can be affirmed to be a quality of virtue.

A strong sense of duty will indeed induce us to avail ourselves of all the talents we possess, and of all the information within our reach, to act agreeably to the rules of absolute rectitude. And if we fail in doing so, our negligence is criminal. "Crimes committed through

ignorance," as Aristotle has very judiciously observed, "are only excusable when the ignorance is involuntary; for when the cause of it lies in ourselves, it is then justly punishable. The ignorance of those laws which all may know if they will, does not excuse the breach of them; and neglect is not pardonable where attention ought to be bestowed. But perhaps we are incapable of attention. This, however, is our own fault; since the incapacity has been contracted by our continual carelessness; as the evils of injustice and intemperance are contracted by the daily commission of iniquity, and the daily indulgence in voluptuousness. For such as our actions are, such must our habits become." *

Notwithstanding, however, the truth and the importance of this doctrine, the general principle already stated remains incontrovertible, that in *every particular instance* our duty consists in doing what appears to us to be *right* at the time; and if, while we follow this rule, we should incur any blame, our demerit does not arise from acting according to an erroneous judgment, but from our previous misemployment of the means we possessed for correcting the errors to which our judgment is liable.†

From these principles it follows, that actions, although materially right, are not meritorious with respect to the agent, unless performed from a sense of duty. This conclusion, indeed has been disputed by Mr. Hume, upon grounds which I cannot stop to examine; ‡ but its truth is necessarily implied in the foregoing reasonings, and it is perfectly consonant to the sentiments of the soundest moralists, both ancient and modern. Aristotle inculcates this doctrine in many parts of his Ethics. In one passage he represents it as essential to virtuous actions, that the actions are done ἕνεκα τοῦ καλοῦ; § and in another place he says, ἔστι γὰρ αὐτὴ ἡ εὐπραξια τελος. ||

* Aristotle's Ethics by Gillies, p. 305.

† A distinction similar to that now made between absolute and relative rectitude was expressed among the schoolmen by the phrases *material* and *formal virtue*.

‡ Treatise of Human Nature, Vol. III. p. 41. *et seq.* First Edit. "I suppose a person to have lent me a sum of money," &c. &c.

§ Α' δὲ καθ' ἀρετὴν πράξις καλαὶ, καὶ τοῦ καλοῦ ἕνεκα. *Arist. Ethic. Nic.* Lib. iv. chap. 1.

|| Ibid. Lib. vi. cap. 5.

To the same purpose also Lord Shaftesbury. "In this case alone it is we call any creature worthy or virtuous, when it can attain to the speculation or sense of what is morally good or ill, admirable or blameable, right or wrong. For though we may vulgarly call an ill horse vicious, yet we never say of a good one, nor of any mere changeling or idiot, though never so good-natured, that he is worthy or virtuous. So that if a creature be generous, kind, constant, and compassionate, yet, if he cannot reflect on what he himself does or sees others do, so as to take notice of what is worthy and honest, and make that notice or conception of worth and honesty to be an object of his affection, he has not the character of being virtuous; for thus, and no otherwise, he is capable of having a sense of right or wrong." And elsewhere he observes, "that if that which restrains a person and holds him to a virtuous like behaviour, be no affection towards virtue or goodness itself, but towards private good merely, he is not in reality the more virtuous." *

* Dr. Price, in his *Review*, has made a number of judicious observations on this subject; and Dr. Reid, in his Essays *on the Active Powers of Man*, has a particular chapter allotted to the consideration of this very question, "*whether an action deserving moral approbation must be done with the belief of its being morally good?*" in which the doctrine he endeavours to establish in opposition to Mr. Hume is precisely the same with that which has been now stated. "The fallacy of Mr. Hume's reasoning," he observes, "arises from the double sense of the words *moral goodness*. We ascribe it to actions considered abstractly, without any relation to the agent. We likewise ascribe moral goodness to an agent on account of an action he has done. With respect to the agent, a good action is undoubtedly that in which he applied his intellectual powers properly, in order to judge what he ought to do, and acted according to his best judgment. This is all that can be required of a moral agent, and in this his moral goodness in any good action consists. But is this the goodness which we ascribe to an action considered abstractly? No, surely. Goodness in an action considered abstractly lies in this, and in this only, that it is an action which ought to be done by those who have the power and opportunity, and the capacity to perceive their obligation to do it. Now, it is evident that the goodness of an action considered abstractly can have no dependence upon the opinion or belief of an agent any more than the truth of a proposition depends upon our believing it to be true. But when a man exerts his active powers well or ill, there is a moral goodness or turpitude which we figuratively impute to the action, but which is truly and properly imputable to the man only; and this goodness or turpitude depends *very much* upon the intention and the opinion he had of his action."

The only correction I would beg leave to make on the foregoing passage is, that, whereas Dr. Reid says, "the goodness or turpitude of an action depends *very much* upon the intention of the agent, and the opinion he had of his action," I would say that it depends on these circumstances *entirely* or *solely*. This indeed is a consequence following necessarily from his own principles.

SECTION IV.

Of the Office and Use of Reason in the Practice of Morality.

I FORMERLY observed that a strong sense of duty, while it leads us to cultivate with care our good dispositions, will induce us to avail ourselves of all the means in our power for the wise regulation of our external conduct. The occasions on which it is necessary for us to employ our reason in this way are chiefly the three following:—

1. When we have ground for suspecting that our moral judgments and feelings may have been warped and perverted by the prejudices of education.

I formerly showed that the moral faculty is an original principle of the human constitution, and not the result (as Mandeville and others suppose) of habits superinduced by systems of education planned by politicians and divines. The moral faculty indeed, like the faculty of reason, (which forms the most essential of its elements) requires care and cultivation for its developement; and, like reason, it has a gradual progress, both in the case of individuals and of societies. But it does not follow from this that the former is a fictitious principle any more than the latter, with respect to the origin of which I do not know that any doubts have been suggested by the greatest sceptics.

Although, however, the moral faculty is an original part of the human frame, and although the great laws of morality are engraven on every heart, it is not in this way that the greater part of mankind arrive at their first knowledge of them. The infant mind is formed by the care of our early instructors, and for a long time thinks and acts in consequence of the confidence it reposes in their superior judgment. All this is undoubtedly agreeable to the design of Nature, and, indeed, if the case were otherwise, the business of the world could not possibly go on; for nothing can be plainer than this, that the multitude, (at least as society is actually constituted) condemned as they are to laborious employments,

inconsistent with the cultivation of their mental faculties, are wholly incapable of forming their own opinions on the most important questions which can occupy the human mind. It is evident, at the same time, that as no system of education can be perfect, many prejudices must mingle with the most important and best ascertained truths; and as the truths and the prejudices are both acquired from the same source, the incontrovertible evidence of the one serves, in the progress of human reason, to support and confirm the other. Hence the suspicious and jealous eye with which we ought to regard all those principles which we have at first adopted without due examination,—a duty doubly incumbent on those whose opinions are likely, from their rank and situation in society, to influence those of the multitude, and whose errors may eventually be instrumental in impairing the morals and the happiness of generations yet unborn.

2. A second instance in which the exercise of *Reason* may be requisite for an enlightened discharge of our *duty*, occurs in those cases where there appears to be an interference between *different duties*, and where of course it seems to be necessary to sacrifice one duty to another.

In the course of the foregoing speculations I have frequently taken notice of the coincidence of all our virtuous principles of action, in pointing out to us the same line of conduct; and of the systematical consistency and harmony which they have a tendency to produce in the moral character. Notwithstanding, however, this general and indisputable *fact*, it must be owned that cases sometimes occur in which they seem at first view to interfere with each other, and in which, of consequence, the exact path of duty is not altogether so obvious as it commonly is. Thus, every man feels it incumbent on him to have a constant regard to *the welfare of society*, and also to *his own happiness*. *On the whole*, these two interests will be found, by the most superficial inquirer, to be inseparably connected; but, at the same time, it cannot be denied that cases may be fancied in which it seems necessary to make a sacrifice of the one to the other.

In such cases, when the public happiness is very great, and the private comparatively inconsiderable, there is no room for hesitation; but the former may be easily conceived to be diminished, and the latter to be increased to such an amount as to render the exact propriety of conduct very doubtful; more especially when it is considered, that, *cæteris paribus*, a certain degree of preference to ourselves is not only justifiable but morally *right*. In like manner the attachments of nature or of friendship, or the obligations of gratitude, of veracity, or of justice, may interfere with private or public good; and it may not be easy to say, whether *all* of these obligations may not sometimes be superseded by paramount considerations of *utility*. At least these are points on which moralists have been arguing for some thousands of years, without having yet come to a determination in which all parties are agreed. It is much in the same manner that the different foundations of *property* may give rise to different *claims;* and it may be exceedingly difficult to determine, among a variety of *titles*, which of them is entitled to a preference over the others.

The consideration of these nice and puzzling questions in the science of *ethics* has given rise in modern times to a particular department of it, distinguished by the title of *Casuistry;* the great object of which is to lay down general rules or canons for directing us *how* to act, wherever there is any room for doubt or hesitation; and which (in the opinion of Mr. Smith) has attracted more notice than it would otherwise have done, in consequence of the practice of auricular confession in Roman Catholic countries.

The absurdity of casuistry is now so universally admitted, that it is unnecessary to enlarge upon it. The combinations of circumstances into which individuals may be thrown by the accidents of life may be so infinitely diversified, that it is impossible to comprehend them all in any general description; and, therefore, all that the moralist can reasonably attempt is to inculcate those good principles, and to recommend those good dispositions, which in their *general tendency* are likely to en-

sure a virtuous conduct; leaving to individuals the task of exercising their own judgments on those incalculable contingencies in which they may be called on to act.

3. When the ends at which our duty prompts us to aim are to be accomplished by means which require choice and deliberation.

Even if the whole of virtue consisted in following steadily one principle of action, still reason would be necessary to direct us to the means. The truth is, nature only recommends certain ends, leaving to ourselves the selection of the most efficient means by which these ends may be obtained. Thus all moralists, whatever may be their particular system, agree in this, that it is one of the chief branches of our duty to promote to the utmost of our power the happiness of that society of which we are members; but the most ardent zeal for the attainment of this object can be of no avail, unless reason be employed both in ascertaining what are the real constituents of social and political happiness, and by what means this happiness may be most effectually advanced and secured.

It is owing to the last of these considerations that the study of happiness, both private and public, becomes an important part of the science of ethics. Indeed, without this study, the best dispositions of the heart, whether relating to ourselves or to others, may be in a great measure useless.

The subject of happiness, so far as relates to the individual, has been already considered. The great extent and difficulty of those inquiries which have for their object to ascertain what constitutes the happiness of a community, and by what means it may be most effectually promoted, make it necessary to separate them from the other questions of ethics, and to form them into a distinct branch of the science.

It is not, however, in this respect alone that politics is connected with the other branches of moral philosophy. The provisions which nature has made for the intellectual and moral progress of the species all suppose the existence of the political union; and the par-

ticular form which this union happens in the case of any community to assume, determines many of the most important circumstances in the character of the people, and many of those opinions and habits which affect the happiness of private life.

These observations which represent politics as a branch of moral philosophy have been sanctioned by the opinions of all those authors, both in ancient and modern times, by whom either the one or the other has been cultivated with much success. Among the former it is sufficient to mention the names of Plato and Aristotle, both of whom, but more especially the latter, have left us works on the general principles of policy and government, which may be read with the highest advantage at the present day. As to Socrates, his studies seem to have been chiefly directed to inculcate the duties of private life; and yet in the beautiful enumeration which Xenophon has given of his favorite pursuits, the science of politics is expressly mentioned as an important branch of the philosophy of human nature. "As for himself, *man*, and what related to man, were the only subjects on which he chose to employ himself. To this purpose, all his inquiries and conversations turned on what was pious, what impious; what honorable, what base; what just, what unjust; what wisdom, what folly; what courage, what cowardice; what a state or political community; what the character of a statesman or a politician; what a government of men, what the character of one equal to such a government. It was on these and other matters of the same kind that he used to discourse, in which subjects those who were knowing he used to esteem men of honor and goodness, and those who were ignorant to be no better than the basest of slaves." *

In modern times the intimate relation between ethics and politics, and the easy transition by which the one perpetually leads the thoughts to the other, may be distinctly traced in the speculations of Grotius, of Locke, of Fenelon, of Montesquieu, of Turgot, of Smith, and

* Mrs. Fielding's Translation of Xenophon's Memorabilia.

(with a very few exceptions) of all that class of writers in France who were distinguished by the name of Economists. I mention these examples chiefly to show that it is not in consequence of any capricious and arbitrary arrangement that these two branches of science are referred to the same academical department in some of our modern universities; and to illustrate, by an appeal to literary history, the imperfection of those systems of politics which are not founded on the previous study of the nature and duties of man.

APPENDIX I.

(See p. 221.)

ON MAN'S FREE AGENCY.

SECTION I.

Preliminary Observations.—Explanation of some Ambiguous Terms.

ALL the foregoing inquiries concerning the moral constitution of man, proceed on the supposition that he has a freedom of choice between good and evil, and that, when he deliberately performs an action which he knows to be wrong, he renders himself justly obnoxious to punishment. That this supposition is agreeable to the common apprehensions of mankind will not be disputed.

From very early times indeed the truth of the supposition has been called in question by a few speculative men, who have contended that the actions we perform are the necessary result of the constitutions of our minds, operated on by the circumstances of our external situation; and that what we call moral delinquencies are as much a part of our destiny as the corporeal or intellectual qualities we have received from nature. The argument in support of this doctrine has been proposed in various forms, and has been frequently urged with the confidence of demonstration.

This question about predestination and free will has furnished, in all ages and countries, inexhaustible matter of contention, both to philosophers and divines. In the ancient schools of Greece it is well known how generally and how keenly it was agitated. Among the Mahometans it constitutes one of the principal points of division between the followers of Omar and those of Ali; and among the ancient Jews it was the subject of endless dispute between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. It is scarcely necessary for me to add, what violent controversies it has produced, and still continues to produce, in the Christian world.

As this controversy, like most others in metaphysics, has been involved in much unnecessary perplexity by the ambiguity of language, a few brief remarks on some equivocal terms connected with the question at issue may perhaps add something to the perspicuity and precision of the following reasonings. In stating these remarks, however, I shall not scupulously confine myself to such as are to bear on my intended argument, but shall avail myself of every opportunity that may occur of correcting those inaccurate modes of speaking which have any connexion, however distant, with this important article in the Philosophy of the Human Mind.

The word *volition* is defined by Locke to be "an act of the mind, knowingly exerting that dominion it takes itself to have over any part of the man, by employing it in, or withholding it from any particular action." Dr. Reid defines it more briefly to be, "the determination of the mind to do or not to do something which we conceive to be in our power." He remarks, at the same time, that "this definition is not strictly logical, inasmuch as *the determination of the mind* is only another term for volition. But it ought to be observed, that the most simple acts of the mind do not admit of being logically defined. The only way to form a precise notion of them is to reflect attentively upon them as we feel them in ourselves. Without this reflection no definition can enable us to reason about them with correctness."

It is necessary to form a distinct notion of what is meant by the word *volition*, in order to understand the import of the word *will;* for this last word properly expresses that *power* of the mind of which volition is the *act*, and it is only by attending to what we experience, while we are conscious of the act, that we can understand any thing concerning the nature of the power.

The word *will*, however, is not always used in this its proper acceptation, but is frequently substituted for *volition*; as when I say that my hand moves in obedience to my *will*. This indeed happens to the names of most of the powers of the mind; that the same word is employed to express the power and the act. Thus imagination signifies both the power and the act of imagining; abstraction signifies both the power and the act of abstracting, and so in other instances. But although the word *will* may, without departing from the usual forms of speech, be used indiscriminately for the power and the act, the word volition applies only to the latter; and it would undoubtedly contribute to the distinctness of our reasonings to restrict the signification of the word *will* entirely to the former.

It is not necessary, I apprehend, to enlarge any more on the meaning of these terms. It is to be learned only from careful reflection on what passes in our own minds, and to multiply words upon the subject would only involve it in obscurity.

There is, however, a state of the mind perfectly distinct, both from the power and the act of willing, with which they have been frequently confounded, and of which it may therefore be proper to mention the characteristical marks. The state I refer to is properly called *desire*, the distinction between which and *will* was first clearly pointed out by Mr. Locke. "I find the *will*," says he, "often confounded with several of the affections, especially *desire*, and that by men who would not willingly be thought not to have had very distinct notions of things, and not to have writ very clearly about them."—"This," he justly adds, "has been no small occasion of obscurity and mistake in this matter, and therefore is, as much as may be, to be avoided." The substance of his remarks on the appropriate meaning of these two terms amounts to the two following propositions. 1. That at the same moment a man may desire one thing and will another. 2. That at the same moment a man may have contrary desires, but cannot have contrary wills. The notions, therefore, which ought to be annexed to the words *will* and *desire* are essentially different.

It will be proper, however, to state Mr. Locke's observations in his own words: "He that shall turn his thoughts inwards upon what passes in his own mind when he *wills*, shall see that the will or power of volition is conversant about nothing, but that particular determination of the mind, whereby, barely by a thought, the mind endeavours to give rise, continuation, or stop to any action which it takes to be in its power. This well considered plainly shows, that the will is perfectly distinguished from desire, which, in the very same action, may have a quite contrary tendency from that which our wills set us upon. A man whom I cannot deny, may oblige me to use persuasions to another, which, at the same time I am speaking, I may wish not to prevail on him. In this case, it is plain the will and desire run counter. I *will* the action that tends one way, whilst my desire tends another, and that the direct contrary. A man who, by a violent fit of gout in his limbs, finds a want of appetite in his stomach removed, desires to be eased too of the pain of his feet or hands, (for, wherever there is pain there is a desire to be rid of it;) though yet, while he apprehends that the removal of the pain may translate the noxious humors to a more vital part, his *will* is never determined to any one action that may serve to remove this pain. Whence it is evident that desiring and willing are two distinct acts of the mind; and, consequently, that the will, which is but the power of volition, is much more distinct from desire."

It is surprising how little this important passage has been attended to by Locke's successors.*

Inclination is another word with which *will* is frequently confounded. Thus, when the apothecary says in *Romeo and Juliet*,

> "My poverty, but not my *will* consents;
> Take this and drink it off; the work is done;"

the word *will* is plainly used as synonymous with inclination; *not* in its strict logical sense, as the immedate antecedent of *action*. It is with the same latitude that the word is used in common conversation, when we speak of doing a thing which duty prescribes *against our own will*; or when we speak of doing a thing *willingly* or *unwillingly*.

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* According to Mr. Belsham, "*Volition* is a modification of the passion of *desire*." (Elements, 227.) In another passage we are told by the same author, that "*volition* has been proved by Dr. Hartley to be *a case of association*;" (Ibid. 175,)—a proposition which to my mind is quite incomprehensible.

In some instances *pleasure* is used in the same sense with *will*, as in this sentence of Locke. "We can *at pleasure* move several parts of our bodies;" and in the following line of Pope *will* is used for *pleasure*.

"Go then, the guilty *at thy will* chastise."

It is very remarkable that the two words are used as synonymous by Collins, in stating the very proposition which it is the object of his tract to establish. "I contend for liberty," says he, "as it signifies a power in man to do as he *wills* or *pleases*."

Dr. Johnson on this, as on every other occasion where logical precision of ideas is called for in a definition, is strangely indistinct and inconsistent. *Will* he defines to be "that power by which we *desire* a purpose;" and he gives as its *synonyme* the scholastic word *velleity*. On turning to the article *velleity*, we are told that "it is the school term used to signify *the lowest degree of desire*;" in illustration of which Dr. South is quoted, according to whom "the *wishing* of a thing is not properly the *willing* it, but it is that which is called by the schools an imperfect *velleity*, and imports no more than an idle inoperative complacency in, and *desire* of the end, without any consideration of the means."

Dr. Priestley's language on this subject is as loose as that of Dr. Johnson. "What is *desire* but a *wish* to obtain some apprehended good? And is not every wish a volition?" *

In the next page he tells us, that "the determinations of what we call the *will* are in fact nothing more than a particular case of the general doctrine of association of ideas, and, therefore, a perfectly mechanical thing."

In another paragraph of the chapter quoted above, Locke justly objects to the terms in which the question concerning liberty and necessity is commonly stated, *whether man's will be free or no?* This question he pronounces to be "*unreasonable and unintelligible;* inasmuch as *liberty*, which is but a *power*, belongs only to agents, and cannot be an attribute or modification of the *will*, which is also but a *power*." †

To this remark of Locke it may be added, that, instead of speaking (according to common phraseology) of the influence of motives on the *will*, it would be much more correct to speak of the influence of motives on the *agent*. We are apt to forget what *the will* is, and to consider it as something inanimate and passive, the state of which can be altered only by the action of some external cause. The habitual use of the metaphorical word *motives*, to denote the intentions or purposes which accompany our voluntary actions, or, in other words, the *ends* which we have in view in the exercise of the power intrusted to us, has a strong tendency to confirm us in this error, by leading us to assimilate in fancy the *volition* of a mind to the *motion* of a body; and the circumstances which give rise to this volition, to the *vis motrix* by which the motion is produced.

It was probably in order to facilitate the reception of his favorite scheme of necessity that Hobbes was led to substitute, instead of the old division of our faculties into the powers of the understanding and those of the will, a new division of his own, in which the name of *cognitive* powers was given to the former, and that of *motive* powers to the latter. To familiarize the ears of superficial readers to this phraseology was of itself one great step towards securing their suffrages against the supposition of man's free agency. To say that the *will* is determined by *motive* powers, is to employ a language which virtually implies a recognition of the very point in dispute. Accordingly, Mr. Belsham is at pains to keep the metaphorical origin of the word *motive* in the view of his readers, by prefixing to his argument, in favor of the scheme of necessity, the following definition.

"*Motive*, in this discussion, is to be understood in its most extensive sense. It expresses whatever MOVES or influences the mind in its choice." ‡

According to Mr. Locke, the ideas of *liberty* and of *power* are very nearly the same. "Every one," he observes, "finds in himself a power to begin or forbear, continue or put an end to several actions in himself. From the consideration of the extent of this power of the mind over the actions of the man, which every one finds in himself, arise the ideas of liberty and necessity." And a few sentences afterwards:—"The idea of liberty is the idea of a power in any agent to do or forbear any particular action, according to the determination or thought of the mind, where-

* Illustrations on Phil. Necess. p. 45.

† This remark had been previously made by Hobbes. ‡ Elem. 228.

by either of them is preferred to the other. Where either of them is not in the power of the agent, to be produced by him according to his volition, there he is not at liberty but under necessity." * That these definitions are not perfectly correct will appear hereafter. They approach, indeed, very nearly to the definitions of liberty and necessity given by Hobbes, Collins, and Edwards; whereas Locke, in order to do justice to his own decided opinion on the subject, ought to have included also in his idea of liberty, a *power* over the determinations of his will.

It is owing in a great measure to this close connexion between the ideas of *free will* and of *power*, and to the pleasure with which the consciousness of *power* is always accompanied, that we feel so painful a mortification in perusing those systems in which our free agency is called in question. Dr. Priestley himself, as well as his great oracle, Dr. Hartley, has acknowledged, that "he was not a ready convert to the doctrine of necessity, and that he gave up his liberty with great reluctance."† But whence this reluctance to embrace a doctrine so "great and glorious," but from its repugnance to the natural feelings and natural wishes of the human mind?

In addition to the foregoing considerations, the following detached hints may be of use in guarding us against some logical oversights which have misled a large proportion of the ingenious men who have engaged in this controversy.

In the case of inanimate matter, when I say that the motion produced is proportional to the impressed force, I only assert an identical proposition; for my only notion of *the quantity of a force* is from the effects it produces. In like manner, in the case of *motives*, I may, if I choose, define the *strength* of a motive by its prevailing over other motives in determining the will, and then lay it down as a proposition, that the will is determined by the strongest motive. In this case likewise it is evident that I only assert an identical proposition,—a proposition, however, extremely apt to mislead, in consequence of its applying to mind the word *strength*, which, from its ordinary and proper application to the forces that move *inert* matter, suggests a theory concerning the influence of motives which takes for granted the thing to be proved.

Let us consider what is meant, when it is said that the will is *necessarily* determined by motives. Is it to be understood that the connexion is similar to that between a force impressed on a body and the subsequent motion? But of the nature of this connexion I am as ignorant as of the other. In both cases I only see the fact. It is remarkable that the advocates for necessity have attempted to explain the actions of voluntary agents by the phenomena of motion, and that some other metaphysicians (in particular Kepler and Lord Monboddo) have attempted to explain the phenomena of motion by the operations of voluntary agents. In both cases philosophers saw the difficulties attending that set of phenomena to which they confined their attention, and endeavoured to explain them by the analogy of another class of facts not so immediately under their consideration at the moment, without recollecting that both the one and the other are equally placed beyond our comprehension.

Although, however, the connexion between an impressed force and the subsequent motion be as inexplicable as the connexion between the motive and the subsequent action, I would not be understood to insinuate that the two cases are at all parallel. In the case of motion, although I cannot trace the necessary connexion between it and the impressed force, I am certain that the motion is the effect of *some cause* with which it is necessarily connected; for every change that takes place in an inanimate object suggests to me the notion of a cause. But in the case of the determinations of a voluntary agent, *he* is himself the author of them; nor could any thing have led philosophers to look out for any other causes of them, but an apprehended analogy between volition in a mind and motion in a body.

The argument for necessity derives all its force from the maxim, "that every change requires a cause." ‡ But this maxim, although true with respect to inani-

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* Locke's Works, 8vo. Edit. Vol. I. 224.

† Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity illustrated. Preface, page xxvii. Birmingham, 1732.

‡ This maxim is generally stated in too unqualified a form. "In the idea of every *change*," says Dr. Price, "is included that of its being an *effect*."—(*Review, &c.* p. 30. 3d. edit. Lond. 1827.) He should have said *every change in inanimate matter*. That he himself understood it under this limitation is evident, from the zeal with which he always combats the scheme of necessity.

mate matter, does not apply to intelligent agents, which cannot be conceived without the power of self-determination. Upon an accurate analysis, indeed, of the meaning of words, it will be found that the idea of an *efficient cause* implies the idea of *mind*, and consequently, that it is absurd to ascribe the volitions of *mind* to the efficiency of causes foreign to itself. It is curious that Mr. Hume, who has in one part of his system denied the certainty of the maxim just now mentioned, has, in another part of it, adopted the scheme of necessity, although that scheme derives all its plausibility from an undue and unwarrantable extension of this very maxim.*

Before quitting this part of the subject, there remains to be considered another argument for the necessary connexion between motives and actions, which has been lately proposed by Dr. Priestley, and on which that very ingenious writer seems to lay considerable stress.

This argument proceeds on the supposition that man is wholly a *material* being, and that the power of thinking is the result of a certain organization of the brain. But, if man be wholly material, does it not follow that all his functions must be regulated by the laws of mechanism, and that, of consequence, all his actions proceed from an irresistible necessity? According to this argument, therefore, the doctrine of necessity is an obvious corollary from that of materialism.

As this reasoning takes the scheme of materialism for granted, it is they alone who have adopted that scheme who are interested in examining whether the reasoning be conclusive or not. The only question, therefore, before us at present is, whether the author's conclusion be a logical consequence of his premises. That it

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* From these observations it seems to me to follow, that, whatever may be the nature of the relation between a motive and an action, there is no reason for concluding it to be at all analogous to that between a cause and its effect. In further proof of this some authors have remarked, that the latter connexion is always constant and uniform, whereas we know that the same motive may at different times lead to very different actions.—See the very ingenious Essays, Philosophical and Literary, of the late learned and excellent Dr. James Gregory.)—But this answer is not satisfactory; and as it places the point in dispute on an improper ground, it may be useful to show in what its fallacy consists. By giving up an argument which will not bear examination we strengthen a good cause, no less than by producing additional evidence in its support.

In considering the connexion between cause and effect, there are three things to be attended to; the cause, the subject on which it operates, and the effect. While the cause and the subject continue the same, we expect the same effect with the utmost confidence; but if either the cause or the subject vary we expect that the effect will be different. When we speak of the constant conjunction between cause and effect in physics, we always take for granted that the cause operates in the same circumstances. A variety of cases might be mentioned in which we see the operation of the same cause, but are unable to predict with certainty what the effect will be, in consequence of our ignorance concerning *the state of the subject*. This is the case with respect to the medicines which we apply to the human body. Now, the fact may be supposed to be somewhat analogous with respect to the mind. It always indeed retains a consciousness of its *personal identity*; but notwithstanding this circumstance it is constantly undergoing very important alterations,—insomuch that the character may be changed in a considerable degree by the acquisition of new information, or the acquisition of new habits, (both of which it may derive from external circumstances in a way altogether independent of its choice.) Indeed it may be doubted whether the mind can be considered as exactly the same subject in any two instants of its existence. We are not therefore entitled to conclude that the relation between motive and action is different from the relation between cause and effect in physics, *merely from the want of constant conjunction*, unless it could be shown that the same motive was followed by different actions *when operating upon the same precise subject*. Nor is this all. The same verbal proposition, when stated at different times to the same individual, cannot be considered as the same motive, unless it is always apprehended in the same light by the *understanding*, the conclusions of which plainly do not depend on our choice. Allowing, therefore, that the relation between motive and action were the same with the relation between cause and effect, it might happen that no constant conjunction between them should be observable, in consequence either of some alteration in the state of the intellectual powers, or of the active principles.

is *not* a consequence of his premises, but a mere play on words, will appear obvious from the following consideration.

That matter is incapable of acting, excepting in so far as it is acted upon, is a principle universally admitted by the soundest philosophers, and perfectly agreeable to the common apprehensions of mankind. But this principle is founded on the supposition, that matter is inert and insentient, incapable of thought, or of changing its state either of rest or of motion till it is acted on by some foreign power. If we reject this supposition, as Dr. Priestley has done, and consider matter as consisting of certain powers of attraction and repulsion, and requiring nothing but a particular arrangement or organization to exhibit the phenomena of sensation and of thought, we are certainly not entitled to apply any inference from our common notions concerning matter to the functions of a being, organized as Dr. Priesley supposes man to be. If our ideas of matter imply nothing more than certain powers of attraction and repulsion, and if matter properly organized may produce a being capable of sensation and of thought, why may not the same organization produce a being capable of acting from his own free will, and without the necessary influence of any motive imposed on him from without? In this instance, therefore, Dr. Priestley's zeal for a favorite opinion has betrayed him into a sophism very unworthy of his abilities, and which derives the very slight plausibility it possesses entirely from an ambiguity in the meaning of the word *matter*, occasioned by his own peculiar speculations on its nature and properties.

It is amusing enough that this very argument of Dr. Priestley's, or at least one extremely similar to it, was long ago proposed *ironically* by Dr. Berkeley, in his ingenious dialogues, entitled the *Minute Philosopher*,—a book which, (notwithstanding a few paradoxical passages connected with the author's system of idealism) may be safely recommended as one of the most instructive, as well as entertaining works, of which English philosophy has to boast. "Corporeal objects strike on the organs of sense, whence ensues a vibration in the nerves, which being communicated to the soul or animal spirit in the brain or root of the nerves, produceth therein that motion called volition; and this produceth a new determination on the spirits, causing them to flow in such nerves as must necessarily, by the laws of mechanism, produce such certain actions. This being the case, it follows that those things which vulgarly pass for human actions are to be esteemed mechanical, and that they are falsely ascribed to a free principle. There is therefore no foundation for praise or blame, fear or hope, reward or punishment, nor consequently for religion, which is built upon and supposeth those things." * The alteration which Dr. Priestley has made on this argument is certainly far from an improvement; for his peculiar notions concerning the nature of matter render it much more inconsequential than it must appear to those who retain the common opinions on that subject.

SECTION II.

Statement of the common Argument for Necessity.

BEFORE proceeding to an examination of this question I shall premise a few principles in which both parties are agreed, or which at least appear *to me* to be concessions, which the advocates for free will may safely make to their antagonists without any injury to their general argument.

1. Every action is performed with some view, or, in other words, is performed from some motive. Dr. Reid indeed denies this with zeal, but I am doubtful if he has strengthened his cause by doing so; † for he confesses that the actions which are performed without motives are perfectly trifling and insignificant, and not such as lead to any general conclusion concerning the merit or demerit of moral agents. I should therefore rather be disposed to yield this point than to dispute a proposition not materially connected with the question at issue. One thing is clear and indisputable, that it is only in so far as a man acts from motives or intentions, that he is entitled to the character of a rational being.

2. The merit of an action depends entirely on the motive from which it was performed. Dr. Reid remarks, that some necessitarians have triumphed in this

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* Dialogue vii. xix. † Essays on the Active Powers, pp. 293, 294.

principle as the very hinge of the controversy, whereas the truth is, that no reasonable advocate for free will ever called it in question.

So far, I think, we are justified in going. The great question is, *How* do these motives determine the will? In answer to this question the Necessitarians reason as follows:—

Every change in nature, we are told, implies the operation of a *cause;* and this maxim, it is pretended, holds not only with respect to inanimate matter, but with respect to the changes which take place in the state of a mind. Every volition, therefore, must have been produced by a motive with which it is as necessarily connected as any other effect with its cause; and when different motives are presented to the mind at the same time, the will yields to the strongest, as necessarily as a body urged by two contrary forces moves in the direction of that which is most powerful.

The foregoing argument goes to prove, that all human actions are as necessarily produced by motives as the going of a clock is necessarily produced by the weights, and that no human action could have been otherwise than it really was. Nay, it applies also in full force to the Deity, and indeed to all intelligent beings whatever; for it is not founded on any thing peculiar to the *human* mind, but on the *impossibility of free agency;* and, of consequence, it leads to this general conclusion, that no *event* in the universe could have happened otherwise than it did.

When the scheme of necessity is pushed to this length, it involves the supposition, "that every created being, and every event, even the most trifling, has an existence as necessary as that of the Deity;" a supposition which forms one of the fundamental principles of the system of Spinoza. On this subject, I confess, it appears to me that Spinoza reasons well, and that, if we admit his principles, we cannot deny his conclusion. The conclusion, at the same time, is such as every unprejudiced understanding must revolt at the instant it is mentioned, and which may serve as a demonstration, in the form of a *reductio ad absurdum*, of the erroneousness of the principle from which it is deduced. "It does not indeed appear possible," as Mr. Maclaurin has observed, "to invent another system equally absurd, amounting (as it does in fact) to this proposition, that there is but one substance in the universe endowed with infinite attributes (particularly infinite extension and cogitation) which produces all other things, necessarily as its own modifications, and which alone is, in all events, both physical and moral, at once cause and effect, agent and patient." * Accordingly, Dr. Clarke has been at much pains to prove, that the Deity *must be a free agent*, and, therefore, that free agency is not impossible; from which he infers, that there must be some flaw in the reasonings just stated to prove that man is a necessary agent. If this reasoning of Clarke's be admitted as conclusive, where is the absurdity (I would ask) of supposing, that God may have been pleased to place man in a state of moral discipline, by imparting to him a freedom of choice between good and evil, in like manner as he has imparted to him various other faculties and powers essentially different from any thing we observe in the lower animals? Is not the contrary assertion a presumptuous attempt to set limits to the Divine Omnipotence?

Among the various forms which religious enthusiasm assumes, there is a certain prostration of the mind, which, under the specious disguise of a deep humility, aims at exalting the Divine perfections by annihilating all the powers which belong to human nature. "Nothing is more usual for fervent devotion," says Sir James Mackintosh, in speaking of some theories current among the Hindoos, "than to dwell so long and so wearily on the meanness and worthlessness of created things, and on the all-sufficiency of the Supreme Being, that it slides insensibly from comparative to absolute language, and in the eagerness of its zeal to magnify the Deity, seems to annihilate every thing else." †

This excellent observation may serve to account for the zeal displayed by many devout men in favor of the scheme of necessity. "We have nothing," they frequently and justly remind us, "but what we have received." But the question here is simply a matter of fact, whether we have or have not received from God the gift of free will; and the only argument, it must be remembered, which they have yet been able to advance for the negative proposition, is, that this gift was impossible even for the power of God; an argument, we may remark, which not only annihilates the power of man, but annihilates that of God also, and subjects him, as

* View of Newton's Discoveries, Book i. chap. 4.

† See Philosophy of the Human Mind, Vol. II. p. 359.

well as all his creatures, to the control of causes which he is unable to resist. So completely does this scheme defeat the pious views in which it has sometimes originated. I say *sometimes*, for this very argument against the liberty of the will is employed by Spinoza; according to whom the free agency of man involves the absurd supposition of an *imperium in imperio* in the universe.* Voltaire, too, who in his latter days, abandoning those principles for which he had before, when in the full vigor of his faculties, so zealously and eloquently contended, seems to have become a convert to the scheme of fatalism, has on one occasion had recourse to an argument against man's free agency, similar in substance to what is advanced by Spinoza in the passage now referred to. "En effet, il seroit bien *singulier* que toute la nature, tous les astres obéissent à des loix éternelles, et qu'il y eut un petit animal haut de cinq pieds, qui en mépris de ces lois pût agir toujours comme il lui plairoit au seul gré de son caprice," †—"Singular!" exclaims Dr. Beattie, after quoting the preceding sentence, "Aye, singular indeed—but not a whit more singular than that this same animal of five feet should perceive, and think, and read, and write, and speak; attributes which no astronomer of my acquaintance has ever supposed to belong to the planets, notwithstanding their brilliant appearance and stupendous magnitude." ‡ The reply is quite as good as the argument is entitled to.

SECTION III.

View of the Question given by Hobbes.

According to the view of the subject that has now been taken, we are led to conclude, that man possesses a power over the determinations of his will:—and this is precisely the scheme of what is commonly called *free will*, in opposition to that of *necessity*.

But this power over the determinations of the will has been represented by some philosophers as an absurdity and impossibility. "Liberty," we are told, "consists only in a power to act as we will; and it is impossible to conceive in any being a greater liberty than this. Hence it follows, that liberty does not extend to the determinations of the will, but only to the actions consequent upon its determinations. To say that we have power to will such an action, is to say, that we may will it if we will. This supposes the will to be determined by a prior will; and for the same reason that will must be determined by a will prior to it, and so on in an infinite series of wills, which is absurd. To act freely, therefore, can mean nothing more than to act voluntarily; and this is all the liberty that can be conceived in man or in any other being."

Agreeably to this reasoning, Hobbes defines a free agent to be "he that can do if he will, and forbear if he will." § The same definition has been adopted by Leibnitz, || by Collins, by Gravesande, by Edwards, by Bonnet, and by all later necessitarians. It cannot be better expressed than in the words of Gravesande: "Facultas faciendi quod libuerit, quæcunque fuerit voluntatis determinatio." ¶

Dr. Priestley ascribes this peculiar notion of free will to Hobbes as its author;** but it is in fact of much older date even among modern metaphysicians; coinciding exactly with the doctrine of thoses cholastic divines who contended for the *Liberty of Spontaneity*, in opposition to the liberty of *indifference*. It is, however, to Hobbes that the partizans of this opinion are indebted for the happiest and most popular illustration of it that has yet been given. "I conceive," says he, "liberty to be rightly defined, *the absence of all the impediments to action that are not contained*

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* Tractat. Polit. cap. ii. sect. 6.

† Le Philosophe Ignorant, XIII.

‡ Essay on Truth, p. 360, 2d Ed.

§ Hobbes's Works, p. 484. Fol. Ed.

|| Leibnitz has almost literally translated the words of Hobbes. "Proprie loquendo volumus agere; non vero volumus velle; alioqui dicere etiam possemus, velle nos habere voluntatem volendi, quod in infinitum abiret." (*Leib. Op.* T. I. p. 156.)

¶ Introd. ad Philosoph. sect. 115.

** "The doctrine of philosophical necessity," says Priestley, "is in reality a modern thing; not older, I believe, than Mr. Hobbes. Of the Calvinists, I believe Mr. Jonathan Edwards to be the first." (*Illustrations of Philos. Necess.* p. 195.) Supposing this statement to be correct, does not the very modern date of Hobbes's *alleged* discovery furnish a very strong presumption against it?

in the nature and intrinsical quality of the agent. As, for example, the water is said to descend *freely*, or to have *liberty* to descend by the channel of the river, because there is no impediment that way; but not across, because the banks are impediments. And though water cannot ascend, yet men never say it wants the *liberty* to ascend, but the faculty or *power*, because the impediment is in the nature of the water, and intrinsical. So also we say, he that is tied wants the *liberty* to go, because the impediment is not in him, but in his hands: whereas we say not so of him who is sick or lame, because the impediment is in himself." *

According to Bonnet, "moral liberty is the power of the mind, to obey without constraint the impulse of the motives which act upon it." This definition, which is obviously the same in substance with that of Hobbes, is thus very justly, as well as acutely, animadverted on by Cuvier. "N'admettant aucune action sans motif, comme dit-il il n'y a aucun effet sans cause, Bonnet définit la *Liberté Morale*, le pouvoir de l'âme de suivre sans contrainte les motifs dont elle éprouve l'impulsion; il resout ainsi les objections que l'on tire de la prévision de Dieu; mais peut-être aussi detourne-t-il l'idée qu'on se fait d'ordinaire de la liberté. Malgré ces opinions, qui touchent au matérialisme et au fatalisme, Bonnet fut très réligieux." †

From this passage it appears, that the very ingenious writer was as completely aware as Clarke or Reid, of the unsoundness of the definition of *moral liberty* given by Hobbes and his followers; and that the ultimate tendency of the doctrine which limits the free agency of man to (what has been called) the *liberty of spontaneity*, was the same, though in a more disguised form, with that of fatalism. On points of this sort, I have always a peculiar satisfaction, when I am able to fortify my own conclusions by the opinions of writers educated under other forms of government, and other systems of religion. I need not say how much this satisfaction is increased when the writers, with whom I have the good fortune to agree, rank as high as Cuvier in the philosophical world.

In order to judge how far the reasoning of Hobbes is in this instance satisfactory, it is necessary to attend to the various significations of the word *liberty*; for the sense in which Hobbes has defined it is only one of its acceptations, and by no means the sense in which it ought to be employed in this controversy.‡

1. Liberty is opposed to confinement of the body by superior force, as when a person is shut up in a prison. It is in this sense that *Hobbes* uses the word; for he tells us, that liberty consists only in a power to act as we will. And if the word had no other acceptation, the objection now stated would be a valid one; for as the will cannot be confined by any external force, neither can we with propriety ascribe to the will that species of liberty which is opposed to such confinement.

2. Liberty is opposed to the restraints on human conduct arising from law and government; as when we say, that, by entering into a political society, a man gives up part of his natural liberty. In this sense liberty undoubtedly extends to the determinations of the will; and the very obligations which are opposed to it proceed on the supposition that the will is free. The establishment of law does not abridge this freedom, but, on the contrary, it takes for granted that we have it in our power to obey or to transgress; proposing to us on the one hand, the motives of duty and of interest; and setting before us, on the other, the consequences of wilful transgression.

3. Liberty is opposed to necessity; and it is in this sense the word is employed, when we say that man is a free and accountable being, and that the connexion between motives and actions is not a necessary connexion, like that between cause and effect. This species of liberty has been called by some *moral liberty*.

That there is nothing inconceivable in this idea, appears, I hope, sufficiently from what has been already said. And indeed it is so far from being a metaphysical refinement or subtlety, that the common sense of mankind pronounces men to be accountable for their conduct, only in so far as they are understood to be morally free. Whence is it that we consider the pain of the rack as an alleviation of the falsehoods extorted from the criminal? Plainly because the motives presented to him are supposed to be such as no ordinary degree of self-command is able to resist. And if we were only satisfied that these motives were *perfectly* irresistible, we would not ascribe to him any guilt at all.

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* Treatise of Liberty and Necessity.

† Biographie Universelle, à Paris, 1812. Article Bonnet.

‡ Reid on the Active Powers, pp. 272, 273. Quarto Ed.

As an additional confirmation of Hobbes's doctrine, it has been urged, that human laws require no more to constitute a crime but that it be *voluntary;* and hence it has been inferred, that the criminality consists in the determination of the will, whether that determination be free or necessary.

The case just referred to affords a sufficient refutation of this argument. The confession of the criminal is surely *voluntary* in the strict acceptation of that term; and yet we consider his guilt as alleviated, in the same proportion in which we suppose his moral liberty to be abridged.

It is true that in most cases human laws require no more to constitute a crime, but that it be voluntary; because in general, motives are placed beyond the cognizance of earthly tribunals. But, in a moral view, merit and demerit suppose not only actions to be voluntary, but the agent to be possessed of moral liberty. And even earthly tribunals judge on the same principle, wherever it can be made appear that the person accused was deprived of the power of self-government by insanity, or by some accidental paroxysm of passion.

I shall only mention one other argument in favor of the scheme of necessity; and I have reserved for it the last place, as it has been proposed with all the confidence of mathematical demonstration by a writer of no less note than Mr. Belsham. It is in the form of a *reductio ad absurdum;* and its more immediate object is to expose to ridicule the consequences which necessarily flow from the doctrine of free will.

The argument is this,—"According to the hypothesis of free will, the essence of virtue and vice consists in liberty; for example, benevolence without liberty is no virtue: malignity without liberty is no vice. Both are equally in a neutral state. Add a portion of liberty to both, benevolence instantly becomes an eminent virtue, and malignity an odious vice. That is, IF TO EQUALS YOU ADD EQUALS, THE WHOLES WILL BE UNEQUAL; than which nothing can be more absurd."*

On this reasoning, to which it would be unjust to deny the merit of complete originality, I have no comment to offer. I have quoted it chiefly as a specimen of the logical and mathematical skill of the present advocates for the doctrine of philosophical necessity. In this point of view, it forms an amusing contrast to the lofty pretensions of a sect, which prides itself not only on its superiority to vulgar prejudices, but on its sagacity in detecting a fraud so successfully practised on the rest of mankind, by the author of their moral constitution.

If the foregoing remarks be well founded, the only two opinions which, in the actual state of metaphysical science, ought to be stated in contrast, are that of liberty (or free will) on the one side, and that of necessity on the other. As to the liberty of spontaneity, (which expresses a fact altogether foreign to the point in question,) I can conceive no motive for inventing such a phrase, but a desire, in some writers, to veil the scheme of necessity from their readers, under a language less revolting to the sentiments of mankind; and in others, an anxiety to banish it as far as possible from their own thoughts, by substituting, instead of the terms in which it is commonly expressed, a circumlocution which seems, on a superficial view, to concede something to the advocates for liberty.

The phrase *liberty of indifference*, which has been so frequently substituted (particularly since the time of Leibnitz) for the older, simpler, and much more intelligible phrase of free will, is, in my opinion, not less objectionable than the *liberty of spontaneity.*† It certainly conveys but a very inadequate notion of the thing meant;—the power, to wit, of *choice* or *election;* and *that* not only among things indifferent, but (*a fortiori*) between right and wrong, good and evil.

The distinction between *physical* and *moral* necessity I conceive to be not less frivolous than those to which the foregoing animadversions relate. On this point I agree with Diderot's assertion in a passage to be quoted afterwards, that the word *necessity* (as it ought to be understood in this dispute) admits but of *one* interpretation.

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* Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, by Thomas Belsham, pp. 258, 259.

† Both phrases are favorite expressions with Lord Kames in his discussions on this subject. See in particular the Appendix to his *Essay on Liberty and Necessity*, in the last edition of his Essays on Morality and Natural Religion.

SECTION IV.

Argument for Necessity, proposed by Leibnitz.

It is well known to all who have any acquaintance with the history of modern philosophy, that one of the fundamental principles of the Leibnitzian system is, "that nothing exists without a *sufficient reason* why it should be so, and not otherwise." Of this principle the following succinct account is given by Leibnitz himself in his controversial correspondence with Dr. Clarke:—"The great foundation of mathematics is the principle of contradiction or identity; that is, that a proposition cannot be true and false at the same time. But in order to proceed from mathematics to natural philosophy, another principle is requisite, (as I have observed in my Theodicæa,) I mean the principle of the *sufficient reason*; or, in other words, that nothing happens without a *reason* why it should be so rather than otherwise. And accordingly, Archimedes was obliged, in his book *De Æquilibrio*, to take for granted, that if there be a balance in which every thing is alike on both sides, and if equal weights are hung on the two ends of that balance, the whole will be at rest. It is because no *reason* can be given why one side should weigh down rather than the other. Now by this single principle of the *sufficient reason* may be demonstrated the Being of a God, and all the other parts of metaphysics or natural theology; and even in some measure those physical truths that are independent upon mathematics, such as the dynamical principles, or the principles of force."

Some of the inferences deduced by Leibnitz from this almost gratuitous assumption are so paradoxical, that one cannot help wondering he was not staggered about its certainty. Not only was he led to conclude that the mind is necessarily determined in all its elections by the greatest apparent good, insomuch that it would be impossible for it to make a choice between two things perfectly alike; but he had the boldness to extend this conclusion to the Deity, and to assert, that two things perfectly alike could not have been produced even by Divine Power. It was upon this ground that he rejected a *vacuum*, because all the parts of it would be perfectly like to each other; and that he also rejected the supposition of *atoms*, or similar particles of matter, and ascribed to each particle a *monad*, or active principle, by which it is discriminated from every other particle. The application of his principle, however, on which he evidently valued himself the most, was that to which I have already alluded,—the demonstrative evidence with which he conceived it to establish the impossibility of free agency, not only in man, but in any other intelligent being;* a conclusion which, under whatever form of words it may be disguised, is liable to every objection which can be urged against the system of Spinoza.

With respect to the principle from which these important consequences were deduced, it is observable, that it is stated by Leibnitz in terms so general and vague, as to extend to all the different departments of our knowledge; for he tells us that there must be a sufficient *reason* for every *existence*, for every *event*, and for every

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* The following comment on this part of the Leibnitzian system is from the pen of one of his greatest admirers, Charles Bonnet.—"Cette métaphysique transcendante deviendra un peu plus intelligible, si l'on fait attention, qu'en vertu du principe de la *raison suffisante*, tout est nécessairement lié dans l'univers. Toutes les actions des êtres simples sont harmoniques, ou subordonées les unes aux autres. L'exercice actuel de l'activité d'une monade donnée, est déterminé par l'exercice actuel de l'activité des monades auxquelles elle corresponde immédiatement. Cette correspondence continue d'un point quelconque de l'univers jusqu'à ses extrémités. Representez vous les ondes circulaires et concentriques qu'une pierre excite dans une eau dormante. Elles vont toujours en s'élargissant et en s'affoiblissant.

"Mais, l'état actuel d'une monade est nécessairement détérminé par son état antécédent; celui-ci par un état qui a precéde, ainsi en remontant jusqu'à l'instant de la création.

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"Ainsi le passé, le présent, et le futur ne forment dans la même monade qu'une seul chaîne, Notre philosophe disoit ingénieusement, que *le présent est toujours gros de l'avenir*.

"Il disoit encore que l'Eternel Géométre resolvoit sans cesse ce problême; l'état d'une monade etant donné, en détérminer l'état passé, présent, et futur de tout l'univers."—*Bonnet*, Tome VIII. pp. 303, 304, 305.

truth. This use of the word *reason* is so extremely equivocal, that it is quite impossible to annex any precise idea to the proposition. Of this it is unnecessary to produce any other proof than the application which is here made of it to things so very different as *existences*, *events*, and *truths*; in all of which cases it must of necessity have different meanings. It would be a vain attempt, therefore, to combat the maxim in the form in which it is generally appealed to. Nor indeed can we either adopt or reject it, without considering particularly how far it holds in the various instances to which it may be applied.

The multifarious discussions, however, of a physical,* a metaphysical, and a theological nature, necessarily involved in so detailed an examination, would, in the present times, (even if this were a proper place for introducing them) be equally useless and uninteresting. The peculiar opinions of Leibnitz on most questions connected with these sciences have already fallen into complete neglect. But as the maxim still continues to be quoted by the latest advocates for the scheme of necessity, it may not be altogether superfluous to observe, that, when understood to refer to the changes which take place in the *material* universe, it coincides entirely with the common maxim, that "every change implies the operation of a *cause*;" and that it is in consequence of its intuitive evidence in this particular case, that so many have been led to acquiesce in it in the unlimited terms in which Leibnitz has announced it. One thing will be readily granted, that the maxim, when applied to the determinations of intelligent and moral *agents*, is not *quite* so obvious and indisputable as when applied to the changes that take place in things altogether inanimate and passive.

What then, it may be asked, induced Leibnitz, in the enunciation of his maxim, to depart from the form in which it has generally been stated, and to substitute, instead of the word *cause* the word *reason*, which is certainly not only the more unusual, but the more ambiguous expression of the two? Was it not evidently a perception of the impropriety of calling the motives from which we act the *causes* of our actions; or at least of the inconsistency of this language with the common ideas and feelings of mankind? The word *reason* is *here* much less suspicious, and much more likely to pass current without examination. It was therefore with no small dexterity that Leibnitz contrived to express his general principles in such a manner, that the impropriety of his language should be most apparent in that case in which the proposition is instantaneously admitted by every reader as self-evident; and to adapt it, in its most precise and definite shape, to the case in which it was in the greatest danger of undergoing a severe scrutiny. In this respect he has managed his argument with more address than Collins, or Edwards, or Hume, all of whom have applied the maxim to *mind*, in the very same words in which it is usually applied to inanimate matter.

Let us examine, therefore, Leibnitz's principle as applicable to the determinations of the will, and consider what it implies, and how far it is agreeable to fact. And for this purpose it is necessary to attend to the various senses in which it may be understood; for although it is in this case that the author's expressions are the least exceptionable, they are yet far from being limited to one interpretation.

1. When it is said, that for every voluntary action there must have been a sufficient reason, the proposition may be understood merely to imply that every such action must have had a *cause*. And we may remark by the way, that this is the only interpretation of which the proposition admits, if the word *reason* be used in the same sense in which alone Leibnitz's maxim is applicable to inanimate matter. But in this sense of the proposition it does not at all affect the question about liberty and necessity; for it only implies that the action is an effect, which either proceeded from the free will of the agent (in which case he may justly be said to be the cause

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* One of the happiest applications of this principle in physics that I know of, is in D'Alembert's Demonstration of the Composition of Forces, where the only axiom which he assumes is this,—that, "if a body be acted upon by three equal forces, in directions forming equal angles with each other, it will necessarily remain at rest, there existing no *sufficient reason* why it should move in one direction rather than another." The same principle too, is assumed in the ingenious reasoning employed by Stevinus, to prove "that a chain laid on an inclined plane, with a part of it hanging over at top in a perpendicular line, will be in *equilibrio*, if the two ends of the chain reach down to exactly the same level."—See Mr. Playfair's *Dissertation in the Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica*, Part i. pp. 64, 65.

of the effect) or which did not proceed from his free will (in which case it must ultimately be referred to some other cause.)

2. The principle of the *sufficient reason*, when applied to our voluntary actions, may be understood to imply, that the will is necessarily determined by the greatest apparent good. As this proposition is not peculiar to the system of Leibnitz, it may be proper to state it more fully.

The circumstances of our external situation, (it has been said) and the state of our appetites, desires, &c. at any particular time, evidently do not depend on us. Suppose, then, that I am under the influence of any two active principles which urge me in different directions, and that I deliberate which of them I am to obey: The conclusion my understanding forms on this subject does not depend on me, and this conclusion necessarily determines my will; for it is impossible for a man not to do what appears to him to be, on the whole, the best and most eligible thing at the moment. My will therefore, in every case, depends as little on myself as the conclusion of my understanding when I give my assent to a mathematical demonstration.

The flaw of this reasoning, I apprehend lies in that step in which it is affirmed, that the will is necessarily determined by what appears to us to be *best* and most *eligible* at the moment;—and the only circumstance which gives the proposition the smallest degree of plausibility is the ambiguity of the language in which it is stated. For it may either imply that our volitions are necessarily agreeable to what we *will* at the time; in which case we only assert an identical proposition: Or that the will is necessarily determined by what appears to us to be *morally* best and really most *eligible* at the time; in which case we assert what is contrary to fact.

3. The meaning of the proposition now under consideration may be understood to be this, that for every action there must be a motive.

I have already said that in this sense I am disposed to admit the maxim. Dr. Reid indeed has very confidently maintained the negative; but I do not think (as I formerly observed) that by doing so he has strengthened his cause; for he confesses that the actions which are performed without motives are perfectly trifling and insignificant: Nay, he acknowledges that the merit of an action depends entirely on the motive from which it was performed.

But although we grant this general proposition, it certainly does not follow from it that man is a necessary agent. The question is not concerning the *influence* of motives, but concerning the *nature* of that influence. The advocates for necessity represent it as the influence of a cause in producing its effect. The advocates for liberty acknowledge that the motive is the *occasion* of acting, or the *reason* for acting; but contend that it is so far from being the efficient cause of it that it supposes the efficiency to exist elsewhere, viz. in the mind of the agent. Between these two opinions there is an essential distinction. The one represents man merely as a passive instrument. According to the other, he is really an *agent*, and the sole author of his own actions. He acts indeed from motives, but he has the power of choice among different ones. When he acts from a particular motive, it is not because this motive is *stronger* than others, but because he *willed* to act in this way. Indeed it may be questioned if the word *strength* conveys any idea when applied to motives. It is obviously an analogical or metaphorical expression, borrowed from a class of phenomena essentially different.

"Nothing," says Dr. Clarke, "is without a sufficient reason why it *is* rather than *not*, and why it is *thus* rather than *otherwise*. But in things in their own nature indifferent, mere *will*, without any thing external to influence it, is alone a sufficient reason, as in the instance of God's creating or placing a particle of matter in one place rather than another, when all places are originally alike."

With this observation of Clarke's the following passages from Boscovich coincide. They are taken from his notes on the Latin Poem of *Benedictus Stay, de Systemate Mundi.*

"Eodem pacto sine ullâ etiam ratione quam nos excogitare possimus, ex omnino similibus potuit Deus seligere potius aliqua quam alia, et ex iis quæ selegit alia alibi collocare, ut ex prorsus similibus materiæ punctis, aliud in sole, aliud in Syrio, quorum similium bina etiam haberi in mundo nequâquam Leibnitiani affirmant, quia discerni a se invicem non possunt, nec haberi posset ratio sufficiens, cur primum secundi loco collocatum non esset, et vice versâ. Discernere poterit Deus ipse etiam prorsus similia, si illam intimam cujusque naturam, quam *individuationem* dicimus, videat per quam hoc non est illud. Eam autem ipsam sine ullâ dissimilitudine Divinæ sapientiæ oculos effugere, quis affirmet? Porro ratio cur hæc potius hic quam alibi collocata sit, physica erit semper aliqua, nimirum ipsa actio Divina quâ collocatur. Moralis nulla erit *cur potius*, sed libertas, et ipsa voluntas Divina stabit pro ratione. Sic etiam, ubi nos aliquid eligimus, electionis physica ratio erit ipsa voluntas nostra

volitionem producens; moralis erit semper aliqua, cum voluntas in incognitum non feratur, necs ine motivo operetur, sed non erit ratio cur potius eligat, quam non eligat; verum motivis omnibus, sive moralibus rationibus, consideratis, supererit facultas, eo se inclinandi, ubi etiam minus ponderis rationes habent; ut accuratissime verum sit illud: *Video meliora* (et eodem etiam pacto *jucundiora, utiliora) proboque; deteriora sequor.*"

The point on which this celebrated controversy between Leibnitz and Clarke turns, is very clearly and precisely defined by Maclaurin in his account of Newton's Discoveries. "Leibnitz," he observes, "makes great use of a comparison between the effects of opposite motives on the mind, and of weights placed in the scales of a balance, or of powers acting upon the same body with contrary directions. His learned antagonist denies that there is a similitude between a balance moved by weights and a mind acting upon the view of certain motives; because the one is entirely passive, and the other not only is acted upon, but acts also. The mind, he owns, is purely passive in receiving the impressions of the motive, which is only a perception, and is not to be confounded with the power of acting after or in consequence of that perception. The difference between a man and a machine does not consist only in sensation and intelligence, but in his power of acting also. The balance, for want of this power, cannot move at all when the weights are equal; but a free agent, (says he) when there appear two perfectly alike reasonable ways of acting, has still within itself a power of choosing; and it may have strong and very good reasons not to forbear the exercise of this power, although there may be no *reason* whatever to determine the choice in favor of one rather than of the other. It is evident that, as it is from internal consciousness I know any thing of liberty, so no assertion contrary to what I am conscious of concerning it can be admitted; and it were better perhaps to treat of this abstruse subject after the manner of experimental philosophy, than to fill a thousand pages with metaphysical discussions concerning it."—"Let any man reflect on his own thoughts, from which alone any notions we have of liberty can be derived; and if he is satisfied that he could choose between two desirable things that appear equally good, rather than want both, Leibnitz's argument (drawn from the principle of the *sufficient reason)* can have no force upon him."*

SECTION V.

Defence of the Scheme of Necessity by Collins and Edwards.—Contrast between their Views and those of the later Necessitarians.

I HAVE already said, that, in the opinion of Clarke, the scheme of Necessity, when pushed to its logical consequences, must ultimately terminate in Spinozism. It seems to have been the great aim of Collins to vindicate his favorite scheme from this reproach, and to retaliate upon the partizans of free will the charges of atheism and immorality. In proof of this, I have only to quote the account given by the author himself of the plan of his work.

"Too much care cannot be taken to prevent being misunderstood and prejudged in handling questions of such nice speculation as those of liberty and necessity; and, therefore, though I might in justice expect to be read before any judgment be passed on me, I think it proper to premise the following observations:—

"*First*, though I deny *liberty* in a certain meaning of that word, yet I contend for *liberty* as it signifies a power in man to do as he wills or pleases.

"*Secondly*, when I affirm *necessity*, I contend only for *moral necessity*, meaning thereby that man, who is an intelligent and sensible being, is determined by his reason and his senses; and I deny man to be subject to such necessity, as in clocks, watches, and such other beings, which for want of sensation and intelligence, are subject to an absolute, physical, or mechanical necessity.

"*Thirdly*, I have undertaken to show, that the notions I advance are so far from being inconsistent with, that they are the sole foundations of morality and laws, and of rewards and punishments in society; and that the notions I explode are subversive of them."†

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* Maclaurin, Book II. Vol. ii. chap. 4.

† Whoever has looked into the writings of Priestley and his followers must be instantly sensible how very different their spirit is from that of the above quotation; and yet they uniformly appeal to Collins and Edwards as their great oracles upon this

In the prosecution of his argument on this question, Collins endeavours to show, that "Man is a necessary agent. 1. From our experience. (By *experience* he means our own consciousness that we *are* necessary agents.) 2. From the impossibility of liberty. 3. From the consideration of the Divine prescience. 4. From the nature and use of rewards and punishments. And, 5. From the nature of morality." *

In this view of the subject, and indeed in the very selection of his premises, it is remarkable how completely Collins has anticipated Dr. Jonathan Edwards, the most celebrated, and indisputably the ablest champion, in later times, of the scheme of ne-

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question. Nor is this change in the Necessitarian creed at all wonderful; for it must be owned that the objections urged by Collins and Edwards to the doctrine of free will are of an incomparably more imposing and popular nature, than the very subtile and shadowy arguments by which they have tried to reconcile their scheme with man's moral agency; and, accordingly, I will venture to say, that, among the proselytes they have gained to the first part of their creed, there is not one in a hundred who will subscribe to the second. In this point of view I am afraid that Edwards's book (however well meant) has done much harm in England, as it has secured a favorable hearing to the same doctrines, which, since the time of Clarke, had been generally ranked among the most dangerous errors of Hobbes and his disciples.

* To the arguments of Collins against man's free agency some of his late followers have added the inconsistency of this doctrine with the known *effects of education*, (under which phrase they comprehend also the moral effects of all the external circumstances in which men are involuntarily placed) in forming the characters of individuals.

The plausibility of this argument (on which so much stress has been laid by Priestley and others) arises entirely from the mixture of truth which it involves; or, to express myself more correctly, from the evidence and importance of *the fact* on which it proceeds, when that fact is stated with due limitations.

That the influence of *education* in this comprehensive sense of the word was greatly underrated by our ancestors is now universally acknowledged, and it is to Locke's writings more than to any other single cause, that the change in public opinion on this head is to be ascribed. On various occasions he has expressed himself very strongly with respect to the *extent* of this influence, and has more than once intimated his belief, that the great majority of men continue through life what early education had made them. In making use, however, of this strong language, his object (as is evident from the opinions which he has avowed in other parts of his works) was only to arrest the attention of his readers to the practical lessons he was anxious to inculcate; and not to state a metaphysical *fact* which was to be literally and rigorously interpreted in the controversy about liberty and necessity. The only sound and useful *moral* to be drawn from the *spirit* of his observation is, the duty of gratitude to Heaven for all the blessings, in respect of education and of external situation, which have fallen to our own lot; the impossibility of ascertaining the involuntary misfortunes by which the seeming demerits of others may have been in part occasioned, and in the same proportion diminished; and the consequent obligation upon ourselves to think as charitably as possible of their conduct under the most unfavorable appearances. The truth of all this I conceive to be implied in these words of Scripture, "To whom much is given, of them much will be required;" and, if possible, still more explicitly and impressively in the *Parable* of the *Talents*.

Is not the use which has been made by Necessitarians of Locke's *Treatise on Education*, and other books of a similar tendency, only one instance more of that disposition, so common among metaphysical sciolists, to conceal from the world their incapacity to add to the stock of useful knowledge, by appropriating to themselves the conclusions of their wiser and more sober predecessors, under the startling and imposing disguise of universal maxims, admitting neither of exception nor restriction? It is thus that Locke's judicious and refined remarks on the *Association of Ideas* have been exaggerated to such an extreme in the coarse caricatures of Hartley and of Priestley, as to bring among cautious inquirers some degree of discredit on one of the most important doctrines of modern philosophy. Or, to take another case still more in point, it is thus that Locke's reflections on the effects of education in modifying the intellectual faculties, and (where skilfully conducted) in supplying their original defects, have been distorted into the puerile paradox of Helvetius, that the mental capacities of the whole human race are the same at the moment of birth. It is sufficient for me here to throw out these hints, which will be found to apply equally to a large proportion of other theories started by modern metaphysicians.

cessity. The coincidence is so perfect, that the outline given by the former of the plan of his work might have served with equal propriety as a preface to that of the latter.

From the above summary, and still more from the whole tenor of the *philosophical inquiry*, it is evident that Collins (one of the most obnoxious writers of his days to divines of all denominations) was not less solicitous than his successor, Edwards, to reconcile his metaphysical notions with man's accountableness and moral agency. The remarks, accordingly, of Clarke upon Collins's work are equally applicable to that of Edwards. It is to be regretted that they seem never to have fallen into the hands of this very acute and candid reasoner. As for Collins, it is a remarkable circumstance that he attempted no reply to this tract of Clarke's, although he lived twelve years after its publication. The reasonings contained in it, together with those on the same subject in his correspondence with Leibnitz, and in his demonstration of the being and attributes of God, form, in my humble opinion, the most important, as well as powerful, of all his metaphysical arguments.* The adversaries with whom he had to contend were both of them eminently distinguished by ingenuity and subtilty, and he seems to have put forth to the utmost his logical strength, in contending with such antagonists. "The liberty or moral agency of man," says his friend Dr. Hoadly, "was a darling point to him. He excelled always and showed a superiority to all, whenever it came into private discourse or public debate. But he never more excelled than when he was pressed with the strength Leibnitz was master of; which made him exert all his talents to set it once again in a clear light, to guard it against the evil of metaphysical obscurities, and to give the finishing stroke to a subject which must ever be the foundation of morality in man, and is the ground of the accountableness of intelligent creatures for all their actions."

It is needless to say, that neither Leibnitz nor Collins admitted the fairness of the inferences which Clarke conceived to follow from the scheme of necessity. But almost every page in the subsequent history of this controversy may be regarded as an additional illustration of the soundness of Clarke's reasonings, and of the sagacity with which he anticipated the fatal errors likely to ensue from the system which he opposed.

"Thus," says a very learned and pious disciple of Leibnitz, who made his first appearance as an author about thirty years after the death of his master,†—"Thus the same chain embraces the physical and moral worlds, binds the past to the present, the present to the future, the future to eternity."

"That wisdom which has ordained the existence of this chain has doubtless willed that of every link of which it is composed. A CALIGULA is one of those links, and this link is of iron. A MARCUS AURELIUS is another link, and this link is of gold. *Both* are necessary parts of one whole which could not but exist. Shall God then be angry at the sight of the iron link? What absurdity! God esteems this link at its proper value: He sees it in its cause, and he approves this cause, for it is good. God beholds moral monsters as he beholds physical monsters. Happy is the link of gold! Still more happy if he know that he is *only fortunate*.‡ He has attained the highest degree of moral perfection, and is nevertheless without pride, knowing that what he is, is the necessary result of the place which he must occupy in the chain."

"The Gospel is the allegorical exposition of this system; the simile of the potter is its summary."§

In what essential respect does this system differ from that of Spinoza? Is it not even more dangerous in its practical tendency, in consequence of the high strain of mystical devotion by which it is exalted?

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* Voltaire, who in all probability never read either Clarke or Collins, has said that the former replied to the latter only by theological reasonings; "*Clarke n'a répondu à Collins qu'en Théologien.*" (Quest. sur l'Encyc. Art. LIBERTE'.) Nothing can be more remote from the truth. The argument of Clarke is wholly *metaphysical*, whereas his antagonist in various instances has attempted to wrest to his own purposes the words of Scripture.

† Charles Bonnet, born 1720, died 1793.

‡ The words in the original are, "Heureux le chaînon d'or! plus *heureux* encore, s'il sait qu'il n'est qu'*heureux*." The double meaning of *heureux*, if it render the expression less logically precise, gives it at least an epigrammatic turn, which cannot be preserved in our language.

§ Bonnet, T. VIII. pp. 237, 238.

This objection, however, does not apply to the quotations which follow. They exhibit, without any coloring of imagination or of enthusiasm, the scheme of necessity pushed to the remotest and most alarming conclusions which it appeared to Clarke to involve; and as they express the serious and avowed creed of two of our contemporaries, (both of them men of distinguished talents) may be regarded as a proof, that the zeal displayed by Clarke against the metaphysical principles which led ultimately to such results, was not so unfounded as some worthy and able inquirers have supposed.

"All that is must be," says the Baron de Grimm, addressing himself to the Duke of Saxe-Gotha, "all that is must be, even because it is; this is the only sound philosophy; as long as we do not know this universe *a priori*, (as they say in the schools) ALL IS NECESSITY.* Liberty is a word without meaning, as you will see in the letter of M. Diderot."

The following passage is extracted from Diderot's letter here referred to.

"I am now, my dear friend, going to quit the tone of a preacher, to take, if I can, that of a philosopher. Examine it narrowly, and you will see that the word *liberty* is a word devoid of meaning; † that there are not, and that there cannot be free beings; that we are only what accords with the general order, with our organization, our education, and the chain of events. These dispose of us invincibly. We can no more conceive a being acting without a motive than we can one of the arms of a balance acting without a weight. The motive is always exterior and foreign, fastened upon us by some cause distinct from ourselves. What deceives us is the prodigious variety of our actions, joined to the habit which we catch at our birth, of confounding the voluntary and the free. We have been so often praised and blamed, and have so often praised and blamed others, that we contract an inveterate prejudice of believing that we and they *will* and act freely. But if there is no liberty, there is no action that merits either praise or blame; neither vice nor virtue; nothing that ought either to be rewarded or punished. What then is the distinction among men? The doing of good and the doing of ill! The doer of ill is one who must be destroyed or punished. The doer of good is lucky, not virtuous. But though neither the doer of good or of ill be free, man is nevertheless a being to be modified; it is for this reason the doer of ill should be destroyed upon the scaffold. From thence the good effects of education, of pleasure, of grief, of grandeur, of poverty, &c.; from thence a philosophy full of pity, strongly attached to the good, nor more angry with the wicked, than the whirlwind which fills one's eyes with dust. Strictly speaking there is but one sort of causes, that is, physical causes. *There is but one sort of necessity, which is the same for all beings.*‡ This is what reconciles me to human kind; it is for this reason I exhort you to philanthropy. Adopt these principles if you think them good, or show me that they are bad. If you adopt them they will reconcile *you*, too, with others and with yourself; you will neither be pleased nor angry with yourself for being what you are. Reproach others for nothing, and repent of nothing; this is the first step to wisdom. Besides this, all is prejudice and false philosophy."

The same doctrines have been recently introduced into this country, and I have no doubt with sincerely good intentions, by a very different class of philosophers, the greater part of whom have labored hard to dispute the connexion between the premises and the conclusion. Not so Mr. Belsham. "*Remorse*," says he, "is the exquisitely painful feeling which arises from the belief, that, in circumstances precisely the same, we might have chosen and acted differently. This *fallacious* feeling is superseded by the doctrine of necessity;" § and again, "The doctrine of philosophical necessity supersedes *remorse*, so far as remorse is founded upon the belief, that in the same previous circumstances it was possible to have acted otherwise." ‖

In another part of Mr. Belsham's work the following observation occurs.

"*Remorse* supposes free will. It arises from forgetfulness of the precise state of mind when the action was performed. It is of little or no use in moral discipline. In a degree it is even pernicious." ¶

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* With all due deference to Baron de Grimm, the logical inference ought undoubtedly to have been, "as long as we know nothing of the universe *à priori*, "we are not entitled to say of any thing that it either is or is not necessary."

† Does not this remark of Diderot apply with infinitely greater force to the word *necessity*, as employed in this controversy?

‡ See p. 490. § Elem. p. 284. ‖ Ibid. p. 307. ¶ Ibid. p. 406.

As to our moral sentiments concerning the conduct and character of our fellow creatures, Mr. Belsham is of opinion that the doctrine of necessity conciliates good will to men. "By teaching us to look up to God as the prime agent, and the proper cause of every thing that happens, and to regard men as nothing more than instruments which he employs for accomplishing his good pleasure, it tends to suppress all resentment, malice, and revenge; while it induces us to regard our worst enemies with compassion rather than with hatred, and to return good for evil." *

From these extracts it appears that Mr. Belsham is not only himself convinced of the truth of the doctrine of necessity, considered as a philosophical dogma, but that he conceives it would be for the advantage of the world, if all mankind were to become converts to his way of thinking. In this respect his system is certainly much more of a piece than that of Lord Kames, who, although he adopts zealously the doctrine of necessity, and represents the argument in support of it as demonstrative, yet candidly acknowledges that our natural feelings are adverse to that doctrine; and even goes so far as to say, that without such a feeling the business of society could not be carried on. In this dilemma he attempts to reconcile the two opinions, by the supposition of a deceitful sense of liberty. We are so formed as to believe that we are free agents, when in truth we are mere machines, acting only so far as we are acted upon. †

Perhaps no opinion on the subject of necessity was ever offered to the public which excited more general opposition than this hypothesis of a deceitful sense; and yet, if the argument for necessity be admitted, I do not see any other supposition which can possibly reconcile the conclusions of our reason, with the feelings of which every man is conscious. *Not* that I would insinuate any apology for a doctrine, the absurdity of which is not only obvious but ludicrous, inasmuch as it involves the supposition, that the Deity *intended* that his creatures should believe themselves to be free agents; and that, while the great mass of mankind were thus deceived to their own advantage, a few minds of a superior order had the metaphysical sagacity to detect the imposition. Nor is this all. If the doctrine of necessity be just, it must one day or another become the universal and popular creed of mankind, as every doctrine which is true, and more especially every doctrine which is supported by demonstrative evidence, may be expected to become in the progress of human reason. What will *then* become of the great concerns of human life? Will man, as he improves in knowledge, be unfitted for the ends of his being, and exhibit an inconsistency between his reasoning faculties and his active principles, contrary to the invariable analogy of that systematical and harmonious design which is every where else so conspicuous in the works of nature? ‡

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* P. 316. "The doctrine of necessity," says Dr. Hartley, "has a tendency to abate all resentment against men. Since all they do against us is by the appointment of God, it is rebellion against him to be offended with them."

† The very same hypothesis is adopted by the Abbé Galiani, as the only satisfactory solution of the difficulties connected with this subject. "Voudriez vous savoir," says he to one of his correspondents, Madame de l'Epinay, "mon avis sur cette question? La persuasion de la liberté constitue l'essence de l'homme. On pourroit même définir l'homme *un animal qui se croit libre*, et ce seroit une définition complète. Il est absolument impossible à l'homme d'oublier un seul instant, et de renoncer à la persuasion qu'il a d'être libre. Voilà donc un premier point: être persuadé d'être libre est-il la même chose qu'être libre en effet? Je reponds: ce n'est point la même chose, mais elle produit absolument les mêmes effets en morale. L'homme est donc libre, puisqu'il est intimément persuadé de l'être, et que cela vaut tout autant que la liberté. Voilà donc le mécanisme de l'univers expliqué clair comme de l'eau de roche! S'il y avoit un seul être libre dans l'univers, il n'y auroit plus de Dieu; il n'y auroit plus de liaisons entre les êtres. L'univers se détraqueroit; et si l'homme n'étoit pas essentiellement, intimément convaincu d'être libre, le moral humain n'iroit plus comme il va. La conviction de la liberté suffit pour établir une conscience, un remords, une justice, des récompenses, et des peines. Elle suffit à tout. Et voilà le monde expliqué en deux mots."—*Correspondance inédite de l'Abbé Galiani*, T. I. pp. 339, 340. A Paris, 1818.

I record this as a precious specimen of the flippant metaphysics of a once fashionable *Philosophe* and Abbé in the Salons of Paris. See a lively and amusing portrait of him in Marmontel's Memoirs, Vol. II. pp. 121, 122, 123.

‡ This argument is very ably and forcibly stated in a small pamphlet on Liberty and Necessity, by the late learned and ingenious Mr. Dawson of Sedbergh.

Lord Kames, who was a most sincere inquirer after truth, abandoned in the last edition of his Essays on Morality and Natural Religion, the doctrine of a *deceitful sense of liberty;* and in so doing gave a rare example of candor and fairness as a reasoner. But I am very doubtful if the alterations which he made in his scheme did not impair the merits which, in its original concoction, it possessed in point of consistency. The first edition of this work appeared when the author was in the full vigor of his faculties. The last when he was approaching to fourscore.

SECTION VI.

Is the Evidence of Consciousness in favor of the Scheme of Free Will, or of that of Necessity? *

In what I have hitherto said upon the subject, I have proceeded on the supposition, that the doctrine of free will is consistent with the common feelings and be-

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* It has been lately said by a very ingenious and acute writer, that "in the controversy concerning liberty and necessity, the *only* question at issue between the disputants related to *a matter of fact*, on which they both appealed to the evidence of consciousness; namely, whether, all previous circumstances being the same, the choice of man be not also at all times the same."—*Edinburgh Review*, Vol. XXVII. p. 228.

If the author of this observation had contented himself with saying that this question concerning *the matter of fact*, as ascertained by the evidence of consciousness, *ought* to have been considered as the *only* point at issue between the contending parties, I should most readily have subscribed to his proposition. Indeed, I have expressed myself very nearly to the same purpose in a former work.—(*Philosophy of the Human Mind*, Vol. II. pp. 74, 75. 3d edit.) But if it is to be understood as a historical statement of the manner in which the controversy has always or even most frequently been carried on, I must beg leave to dissent from it very widely. How many arguments against the freedom of the will have been in all ages drawn from the *prescience* of the Deity! How many still continue to be drawn by very eminent divines from the doctrines of predestination and of eternal decrees! Has not Mr. Locke himself acknowledged the impression which the former of these considerations made on his mind! "I own," says he, "freely to you the weakness of my understanding, that though it be unquestionable that there is omnipotence and omniscience in God our Maker, and though *I cannot have a clearer perception of any thing than that I am free*, yet I cannot make freedom in man consistent with omnipotence and omniscience in God, though I am as fully persuaded of both as of any truth I most firmly assent to; and therefore I have long since given off the consideration of that question, resolving all into this short conclusion, that if it be possible for God to make a free agent, then man is free, though I see not the way of it."

A still more recent exception to the general assertion, which has given occasion to this note, occurs in Lord Kames's hypothesis of a deceitful sense of liberty, as maintained in the first edition of his Essays on Morality and Natural Religion. Here, upon the faith of some subtile metaphysical reasonings, the very ingenious author adopts the scheme of necessity in direct opposition to the evidence which he candidly confesses that consciousness affords of our free agency. Even the latest advocates for necessity, Priestley and Belsham, as well as their predecessor, Collins himself, while they appealed (in the very words of the learned critic) to the evidence of consciousness in proof of the fact, *that all previous circumstances being the same, the choice of man is also at all times the same*, yet thought it worth their while to strengthen this conclusion by calling to their aid the theological doctrines already mentioned. I cannot, therefore, see with what color of plausibility it can be said that "this matter of fact has been the *only* question at issue between the disputants."

It may, however be regarded as one great step gained in this controversy, if it may henceforth be assumed as a principle agreed on by both parties, that this is the *only* question which can be philosophically stated on the subject, and that all arguments drawn from the attributes of the Deity are entirely foreign to the discussion. I shall accordingly devote this section to an examination of *the fact*, agreeably to the representation of it given by our modern Necessitarians.

lief of mankind. That "all our actions do now, in experience, *seem* to us to be *free*, exactly in the same manner as they would do upon the supposition of our being really free agents," is remarked by Clarke in his reply to Collins: "And consequently," he adds, "though this alone does not amount to a strict demonstration of our being free, yet it leaves on the other side of the question nothing but a *bare possibility* of our being so framed by the Author of Nature, as to be unavoidably deceived in this matter by every experience and every action we perform. The case is exactly the same," continues Dr. Clarke, "as in that notable question, *whether the world exists or no*. There is no demonstration of it from experience. There always remains a *bare possibility*, that the Supreme Being may have so framed my mind, as that I shall always necessarily be deceived in every one of my perceptions, as in a dream, though possibly there be *no material world*, nor any other creature whatsoever, existing, besides myself. Of this I say there always remains *a bare possibility*, and yet no man in his senses argues from thence, that experience is no proof to us of *the existence of things*." In further confirmation of this remark of Clarke's, let us attend to the inconsistency of the scheme of necessity, with the feelings of which we are conscious, while under the influence of remorse. The argument arising from this consideration is very forcibly stated by Cicero. "Si omnia fato fiunt, omnia fiunt causâ antecedente; et, si appetitus, illa etiam quæ appetitum sequuntur: ergo etiam assensiones. At si causa appetitûs non est sita in nobis, ne ipse quidem appetitus est in nostrâ potestate. Quod si ita est, ne illa quidem quæ appetitu efficiuntur sunt sita in nobis. Non sunt igitur neque assensiones neque actiones in nostrâ potestate: ex quo efficitur, ut nec laudationes justæ sint, nec vituperationes, nec honores, nec supplicia. Quod cum vitiosum sit, probabiliter concludi putant, non omnia fato fieri quæcunque fiant." *

If the scheme of necessity had never received another answer, this alone would have been a sufficient one, admitting only the propriety of introducing into the other sciences the same kind of indirect demonstration which is employed in mathematics. In this case our reasonings on the supposition of necessity lead to a conclusion directly contrary to the most irresistible of all evidence, that of *our own consciousness*.

But this appeal to *consciousness* in proof of free agency proceeds altogether (according to some late writers) on a partial and superficial view of the subject; the evidence of *consciousness*, when all circumstances are taken into the account and duly weighed, being decidedly in favor of the scheme of necessity.

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* De Fato, cap. 17.

The above quotation leads me to take notice of what I consider as a very remarkable and important distinction between the reasonings of the ancient and of the modern Necessitarians. Among the latter the argument commonly begins with a scholastic discussion concerning the *motives* of our actions, and the influence of these motives in determining the will; an influence which they assert to be precisely the same with that of any other cause in producing its effect. And it is from these premises that the inference is drawn in favor either of the scheme of necessity or of that of fatalism, according to the theological views of their respective abettors. By the ancient Necessitarians, on the other hand, the scheme of fatalism, which was closely interwoven with the whole texture of Pagan mythology, was assumed as a first principle; and it was from this principle they deduced their proof that man must be a necessary agent. Their process of reasoning, therefore, was precisely the reverse of that of the moderns, the former employing fatalism to prove the necessary influence of motives,—("Ne Appollinem quidem futura posse dicere, nisi ea, quorum causas natura ita contineret, ut ea fieri necesse esset.") (De Fato, cap. 14.)—and the latter urging the necessary influence of motives in proof of fatalism. Accordingly, in the passage just quoted from Cicero, the consequences which the scheme of fatalism involves, and the repugnance of these consequences to the universal sentiments of mankind, are represented as a demonstration, in the form of a *reductio ad absurdum*, that this scheme cannot be true. This clear perception, however, of the inconsistency of fatalism with man's accountableness or moral agency, there is good reason to believe, was confined to a very few enlightened inquirers, while fatalism continued to be the professed creed of the priesthood, and the real creed of the multitude. Cicero tells us expressly, that in his time it was an article of faith among all the old women in Rome, "Aniculis fato fieri omnia videntur." (De Nat. Deor. ii, 15.) The remark, I am inclined to suspect, is equally applicable to the old women (male and female) of modern Europe.

Dr. Hartley was, I believe, one of the first (if not the first) who denied that our consciousness is in favor of our free agency. "It is true," he observes, "that a man by internal feeling may prove his own free will, if by free will be meant the power of doing what a man wills or desires; or of resisting the motives of sensuality, ambition, &c., that is, free will in the popular and practical sense. Every person may easily recollect instances where he has done these several things, but these are entirely foreign to the present question. To prove that a man has free will in the sense opposite to mechanism, he ought to feel that he can do different things while the motives remain precisely the same. And here, I apprehend, the internal feelings are entirely against free will, where the motives are of a sufficient magnitude to be evident: where they are not, nothing can be proved." *

Mr. Belsham has enlarged still more fully on this subject. "When men," says he, "who have been guilty of a crime, review the action in calmer moments, when the strength of passion has subsided, and the contrary motives appear in all their force, and perhaps magnified by the evil consequences of their vice and folly, they are ready to think, that they might at the time have thought and acted as they now think and act: but this is a fallacious feeling, and arises from their not placing themselves in circumstances exactly similar." † We are elsewhere told by Mr. Belsham, that the popular opinion, that in many cases it was in the power of the agent to have chosen differently, the previous circumstances remaining exactly the same, arises either from a mistake of the question, from a *forgetfulness of the motives by which our choice was determined*, or from the extreme difficulty of placing ourselves in imagination in circumstances exactly similar to those in which the election was made." ‡ And still more explicitly and concisely in the following aphorism: "The pretended consciousness of free will amounts to nothing more than forgetfulness of the motive." § To the same purpose Dr. Priestley has expressed himself. "A man when he reproaches himself for any *particular action* in his past conduct, may fancy that, if he was in the same situation again, he would have acted differently. But this is a mere *deception*; and if he examines himself *strictly*, and takes in all circumstances, he may be satisfied that, with the *same inward disposition of mind*, and with precisely the *same views of things* that he had then, and exclusive of all others that he has acquired by reflection *since*, he could not have acted otherwise than he did." ||

If these statements be accurately examined, they will be found to resolve entirely into this identical proposition, that the *will* of the criminal, being supposed to remain in the same state as when the crime was committed, he could not have *willed* and acted otherwise. This proposition, it is obvious, does not at all touch the cardinal point in question, which is simply this; whether, all OTHER circumstances remaining the same, the criminal had it not in his power to abstain from willing the commission of the crime. The vagueness of Priestley's language upon this occasion must not be overlooked; the words *inward disposition of mind* admitting of a variety of different meanings, and in this instance being plainly intended to include the act of the will as well as every thing else connected with the criminal action.

In the above strictures on these two redoubtable logicians, I have been partly anticipated by the following very acute remarks of Dr. Magee on the definitions of *volition* and of *philosophical liberty*, prefixed to Mr. Belsham's discussion of the doctrines now under our consideration.

"Volition," says Mr. Belsham, "is that state of mind which is immediately *previous* to actions which are called voluntary." "*Natural liberty*, or, as it is more properly called, *philosophical liberty*, or *liberty of choice*, is the power of doing an action or its contrary, *all the previous circumstances remaining the same*."—"Now here," says Dr. Magee, "is the point of free will at once decided; for *volition* itself

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* Observations on Man, Vol. I. p. 507. † Elements, p. 279.
‡ Ibid. p 306. § Ibid. p. 278.
|| Illustrations of Philosophical Necessity, p. 99.

The very same view of the subject has been lately taken by the *Comte de la Place* in his Essai Philosophique sur les Probabilités. "L'axiome connu sous le nom de *principe de la raison suffisante* s'étend aux actions même que l'on juge indifférentes. La volonté la plus libre ne peut sans un motif déterminant leur donner naissance, &c.—l'opinion contraire est une illusion de l'esprit qui perdant de vue les raisons fugitives du choix de la volonté dans les choses indifférentes, se persuade qu'elle s'est déterminée d'elle-même et sans motifs."—*Essai. Phil. &c.* p. 5.

being included among the *previous circumstances*, it is a manifest contradiction to suppose the 'power of doing an action or its contrary, all the previous circumstances remaining the same;' since that supposes the power to act *voluntarily against a volition.*" After this Dr. Magee justly and pertinently adds, "Mr. Belsham might surely have spared himself the trouble of the ninety-two pages which follow."

But why have recourse with Belsham and Priestley, in this argument, to the indistinct and imperfect recollection of the criminal, at a *subsequent* period, with respect to the state of his feelings while he was perpetrating the crime? Why not make a direct appeal to his consciousness at the very moment when he was doing the deed? Will any person of candor deny, that, in the very act of transgressing an acknowledged duty, he is impressed with a conviction, as complete as that of his own existence, that his will is free; and that he is abusing, contrary to the suggestions of reason and conscience, his moral liberty?

Sometimes, indeed, when we are under the influence of a violent appetite or passion, our judgment is apt to see things in a false light; and hence a wise man learns to distrust his own opinion when he is thus circumstanced; and to act, not according to his present judgment, but according to those general maxims of propriety, of which his reason had previously approved in his cooler hours. All this, however, evidently proceeds on the supposition of his *free agency;* and, so far from implying any belief on *his* part of fatalism or of moral necessity, evinces in a manner peculiarly striking and satisfactory, the power which he feels himself to possess, not only over the *present*, but over the *future* determinations of his will. In some *other* instances it happens, that I believe *bonâ fide* an action to be right, at the moment I perform it, and afterwards discover that I judged improperly;—perhaps from want of sufficient information, or from a careless and partial view of the subject. In such a case I may undoubtedly regret as a misfortune what has happened. I may blame myself for my carelessness in not having acquired the proper information before I acted; but I cannot consider myself as criminal in acting at that moment according to the views which I then entertained. On the contrary, if I had acted in opposition to these views, although my conduct might have been agreeable to the dictates of a more enlightened understanding than my own, yet with respect to myself the action would have been wrong.

If the doctrine of necessity were just, what possible foundation could there be for the distinction we always make between an accidental hurt and an intended *injury*, when received from another; or for the different sentiments of *regret* and of *remorse* that we experience, according as the misfortunes we suffer are the consequences of our own misconduct or not. What an alleviation of our sufferings when we are satisfied that we cannot consider ourselves as the authors of them; and what a cruel aggravation of our miseries, when we can trace them to something in which we have been obviously to blame!

I shall only add further on this head, (and it is a consideration which deserves the serious attention of all those who are inclined to the scheme of necessity, from an idea that it overturns the doctrine of a *future retribution*,) that the connexion between the premises and the conclusion in this hypothesis is far from being so indisputable as they may imagine. On a superficial view of the subject, indeed, it may appear that the Deity cannot, in consistence with his *justice*, punish us for what it was not in our power to prevent. But it must be remembered, that the same necessity which destroys *moral evil* on the part of man, subverts all the received notions concerning the *moral attributes of God;* and makes it quite nugatory to speak of what is to be expected either from his justice or goodness. This argument is stated with great force and ability in one of the chapters of Butler's Analogy; and although it was originally proposed with a very different view by that profound and excellent writer, I once heard it urged from the pulpit (with the authority of Bishop Butler's name) as a defence of the doctrines of predestination and absolute decrees. I have no where, however, seen it proposed in a form so bold as in a historical article of the Edinburgh Encyclopædia, from which I shall quote a few sentences in the author's own words. "While the king" (James the Second of Great Britain) "was involved in the deepest distress, in consequence of the desertion of his army, and the success of the Prince of Orange, he was doomed to suffer from the conduct of his daughter, the Princess Anne, (married to Prince George of Denmark,) a species of distress still more severe . . . . . If Heaven, in this world, ever interposes its avenging arm between guilt and happiness, may we not consider the loss of seventeen children as the penalty which it exacted from the mother, who had broken the heart of the most indulgent father; and, as if this exaction had

not been sufficiently severe, the infliction of the punishment PRECEDED the commission of the crime."*

If crimes and their appropriate punishments be both the effects of the absolute decrees of God, it is certainly not more inconsistent with his justice that the punishment should PRECEDE the crimes that follow after it.

SECTION VII.

Of the Schemes of Free Will, and of Necessity considered as influencing Practice.

COLLINS, in his inquiry concerning Human Liberty, after endeavouring to show that "*liberty* can only be grounded on the absurd principles of Epicurean atheism," observes, that "the Epicurean atheists, who were the most popular and most numerous sect of the atheists of antiquity, were the great assertors of liberty; † as,

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* Article, *Anne, Queen of Great Britain.*

† In proof of Collins's assertion, that the ancient Epicureans were advocates for man's free agency, a reference is made by him to the following lines of Lucretius.

"Denique si semper motus connectitur omnis,
Et vetere exoritur semper novus ordine certo,
Nec declinando faciunt primordia motûs
Principium quoddam, quod Fati fœdera rumpat,
Ex infinito ne causam causa sequatur;
Libera per terras unde hæc animantibus extat,
Unde est hæc (inquam) *fatis avolsa voluntas*,
Per quam progredimur, quo ducit quemque voluptas;" &c. &c.
Lib. 2. l. 251.

But it is to be observed, that the liberty here ascribed to the will is nothing more than the liberty of spontaneity, which is conceded to it by Collins, and indeed by all Necessitarians, without exception, since the time of Hobbes. Lucretius, indeed, speaks of this liberty as an exception to universal fatalism; but he nevertheless considers it as a necessary effect of some cause, to which he gives the names of *clinamen*, so as to render man as completely a piece of passive mechanism as he was supposed to be by Collins and Hobbes. The reason, too, which he gives for this is, that, if the case were otherwise, *there would be an effect without a cause.*

"Quare in seminibus quoque idem fateare, necesse 'st,
Esse aliam, præter plagas et pondera, *causam*
Motibus, unde hæc est nobis innata potestas;
De nihilo quoniam fieri nil posse videmus.
Pondus enim prohibet, ne plagis omnia fiant,
Externâ quasi vi: sed, ne mens ipsa necessum
Intestinum habeat cunctis in rebus agendis;
Et, devicta quasi, cogatur ferre patique;
Id facit exiguum *clinamen* principiorum,
Nec regione loci certâ, nec tempore certo."
Ibid. l. 284.

Fatis avolsa voluntas.—On this expression of Lucretius the following acute remarks are made by the French translator (M. de la Grange.) They are not improbably from the pen of the Baron D'Holbach, who is said to have contributed many notes to this edition. (Dict. Historique, Art. GRANGE.) Whoever the author was, he was evidently strongly struck with the inconsistency of this particular tenet with the general principles of the Epicurean philosophy.

"On est surpris qu'Epicure fonde la liberté humaine sur la déclinaison des atomes. On demande si cette déclinaison est nécessaire, ou si elle est simplement accidentelle. Nécessaire, comment la liberté peut elle en être le résultat? Accidentelle, par quoi est elle déterminée? Mais on devroit bien plutôt en être surpris, qu'il lui soit venu en idée de rendre l'homme libre dans un système qui suppose un enchaînement nécessaire de causes et d'effets. C'étoit une recherche curieuse, que la raison qui a pu faire d'Epicure l'apôtre de la liberté." For the theory which follows on this point I must refer to the work in question.—*See Traduction Nouvelle de Lucrèce, avec des Notes*, par M. de la Grange, Vol. I. pp. 218, 219, 220. A Paris, 1768.

on the other side, the Stoics, who were the most popular and numerous sect among the religionaries of antiquity, were the great assertors of *fate* and *necessity*. The case was also the same among the Jews as among the Heathens.* The Sadducees, who were esteemed an irreligious and atheistical sect, maintained the liberty of man. But the Pharisees, who were a religious sect, ascribed all things to fate or to God's appointment; and it was the first article of their creed, that *Fate and God do all*; and consequently, they could not assert a *true liberty*,† when they asserted a *liberty* together with this fatality and necessity of all things." ‡

To the same purpose Edwards attempts to show (and it is one of the weakest parts of his book) that the scheme of free will (by affording an exception to that dictate of common sense which leads us to refer every event to a cause) would destroy the proof *a posteriori* for the being of God. One thing is certain, that the two schemes of atheism and of necessity have been hitherto always connected together in the history of modern philosophy: not that I would, by any means, be understood to say, that every Necessitarian must *ipso facto* be an atheist, or even that any presumption is afforded by a man's attachment to the former sect, of his having the slightest bias in favor of the latter, but only that every modern atheist I have ever heard of has been a Necessitarian. I cannot help adding, that by far the ablest Necessitarians who have yet appeared have been those who followed out their principles till they ended in *Spinozism*; a doctrine which differs from atheism more in words than in reality.

It has been objected by a most respectable writer, (the late pious and learned Sir H. Moncreiff, a great admirer both of Edwards's character and talents) to those who "without attempting to discuss Edwards's argument, set it down as nothing more than an intricate puzzle or quibble," that "if this argument be what they represent it, there must be some way to unravel the puzzle, although they have not the skill, or will not take the trouble to discover it." §

To this proposition I object, 1. Because I can see little or nothing in the argument of Edwards which has not been already completely answered by Clarke or by Reid. 2. Because the consequences to which it leads, although to the satisfaction of a few speculative men they may perhaps be evaded by means of subtile refinements and distinctions) are so directly contrary to the common feelings and judgments of mankind, as to authorize any person of plain understanding boldly to cut asunder the knot which he was unable to unloose. In looking over the article *Sophisms* in our elementary books of logic, I find many (such as Achilles and the Tortoise, the Liar, the Bald, the Sorites or Acervus, and various others) to which I should be much more at a loss to give a satisfactory reply, than to any thing alleged by Collins or Edwards; and yet I should think it a most unwise employment of my time to waste an hour in the refutation of any of them. Nor would I feel much mortification if I should be accused of a want of candor for neither consenting to admit the conclusion, nor to undertake the irksome task of combating the premises. Of the truths disputed in these sophisms, there is not one in my opinion more certain than that of man's free agency; a fact of which our consciousness is so complete, that we cannot even form a conception of a more perfect freedom of choice than we actually possess. On this point it has been justly and acutely remarked by M. Necker, that "when we reflect upon our faculties, we can with ease imagine a

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* With respect to the opinions of the Sadducees and the Pharisees on man's free agency, see the notes on Mosheim's translation of Cudworth's Intellectual System, Vol. I. pp. 9, 10.

† In this passage Collins plainly proceeds on the supposition, that all Fatalists are of course Necessitarians (Collins states this afterwards more strongly in what he says of the Pharisees, see pp. 54, 55,) and I agree with him in thinking, that this would be the case if they reasoned consequentially. It is certain, however, that a great proportion of those who have belonged to the first sect have disclaimed all connexion with the second. The Stoics themselves furnish one very remarkable instance. I do not know any author by whom the liberty of the will is stated in stronger and more explicit terms than it is by Epictetus, in the first sentence of the *Enchiridion*. Indeed, the Stoics seem, with their usual passion for exaggeration, to have carried their ideas about the freedom of the will to an unphilosophical extreme.

‡ Pp. 54, 55.—See the authorities referred to by Collins; see also the sequel of the above passage.

§ *Life* of the Reverend Dr. John Erskine.

superior degree of intelligence, of knowledge, of memory, of foresight, and of every other property of our understanding; liberty is the only part of ourselves to which imagination cannot add any thing." *

In Bernier's abridgment of the Philosophy of Gassendi, there are some very judicious observations on the practical tendency of the scheme of necessity; a subject on which his opinion is entitled to great weight, not only from his long residence among the followers of Mahomet,† but from those prepossessions in favor of this scheme, which he may be presumed to have imbibed from his education under Gassendi. I shall quote a few of his concluding reflections.

"De tout ceci jugez si j'ai sujet de croire cette doctrine si pernicieuse à la société humaine. Certainement à considérer que ce sont principalement les Mahumétans qui s'en trouvent infectés, et que c'est principalement encore parmi eux présentement qu'elle est fomentée et entretenue, je douterois presque que ce fut l'invention de quelques uns de ces tyrans d'Asie, comme auroit peut-être un Mahomet, un Tamerlane, un Bajazet, ou quelqu'un de ces autres fléaux du monde qui pour assouvir leur ambition demandoit des soldats, qui, étant entêtés de prédestination, s'abandonassent brutalement à tout, et se précipitassent même volontiers, aux occasions, la tête la première dans le fossé d'une ville assiégée pour servir du pont au reste de l'armée.

"Je sçais bien qu'on pourroit peut-être dire que cette opinion est mal prise et mal entendue par les Mahumétans; mais quoi qu'il en soit, que doit on raisonablement penser d'une doctrine qui peut si aisément être mai-prise et qui peut, soit par erreur ou autrement, avoir si étranges suites?"

The scheme of free will is not liable to any such objection, inasmuch as it seems quite impossible for the most ingenious sophistry to pervert it to any pernicious purpose. Indeed, its great object is to reconcile with the conclusions of our reason those moral feelings which are so essential both to our own happiness and to the interests of society, that they have been regarded by some of the most acute as well as candid partisans of necessity as merciful illusions of the imagination, by which man is blinded to the melancholy fact of his real condition: "*Nervis alienis mobile lignum!*"

There is good reason to believe, that the practical consequences produced by the scheme of necessity, at the time of the reformation, alarmed the minds of some very able men by whom it was at first adopted. "The Germans," says Dr. Burnet, "saw the ill effects of the doctrine of decrees. Luther changed his mind about it, and Melancthon wrote openly against it; and since that time the whole stream of the Lutheran churches has run the other way. But still Calvin and Bucer were both for maintaining the doctrine; only they warned the people not to think much about them, since they were secrets that men could not penetrate into. Hooper and many other good writers did often exhort the people from entering into these curiosities; and a caveat to the same purpose was put into the article about Predestination." ‡

"Concerning the disputants themselves," says Dr. Jortin, "we may safely affirm, that the defenders of the liberty of man, and of the conditional decrees of God, have been, *beyond all comparison*, the more learned, judicious, and *moderate men*; and that severity and oppression have appeared most on the other side." §

Priestley has somewhere very justly remarked, that there are some men so happily born, that no speculative theories are likely to mislead them from their duty; and of the truth of his observation, I sincerely believe that his own private life afforded a very striking example. Little stress, therefore, is to be laid on *individual cases* as arguments for or against the practical tendency of any philosophical dogma. The case, however, is very different with respect to observations made on so great a scale as those above quoted from Bernier and Burnet. ||

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* On the subject of such sophisms as Achilles and the Tortoise, many books, we are told, were written, and various individuals are mentioned who fell into fatal diseases, or died of grief, in consequence of their fruitless endeavours to clear up the mystery.—See *Bayle's Dict.* Art. EUCLID OF MEGARA.

† See Tome VIII. p. 536, *et seq.*

‡ Burnet on the Reformation, Part ii. p. 113.

§ Jortin's Dissertations, p. 5.

|| The practical influence of the scheme of necessity ought not to be judged of from the lives of its speculative partisans, but from those of persons who have been educated from their early years in the belief of it. In this point of view it might be interesting to trace the history of the immediate descendants of some of the

SECTION VIII.

On the Argument for Necessity drawn from the Prescience of the Deity.

In reviewing the arguments that have been advanced on the opposite sides of this question, I have hitherto taken no notice of those which the Necessitarians have founded on the *prescience of the Deity*, because I do not think them fairly applicable to the subject; inasmuch as they draw an inference from what is altogether placed beyond the reach of our faculties, against a fact for which every man has the evidence of his own consciousness. Some of the advocates, however, for liberty have ventured to meet their adversaries even on this ground; in particular, Dr. Clarke, in his Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God, and Dr. Reid, in his Essays on the Active Powers of Man. Both of these writers have attempted to show, with much ingenuity and subtilty of reasoning, that, even although we should admit the prescience of God in the fullest extent in which it has ever been ascribed to Him, it does not lead to any conclusion inconsistent with man's free agency. On their speculations on this point I have no commentary to offer.

The argument for necessity, drawn from the Divine Prescience, is much insisted on both by Collins and Edwards; more especially by the latter, who; after insisting at great length on "God's certain foreknowledge of the volitions of moral agents," undertakes to show, that "this *foreknowledge* infers a necessity of volition as much as an absolute decree."

Mr. Belsham, on this as on other occasions, rises above his predecessors in the boldness of his assertions. "The principal argument in favor of moral necessity, and the insurmountable objection against the existence of philosophical liberty in any degree, or under any restrictions whatever, arises from the prescience of God. Liberty and prescience stand in direct hostility to each other. A philosopher, to be consistent, must give up one or the other.* Upon the whole, the advocates for philosophical liberty are reduced to the dilemma either of denying the foreknowledge of God, *and thus robbing the Deity of one of his most glorious attributes*, or of admitting that God is the author of evil, in the same sense, and in the same degrees, in which this doctrine is charged upon the Necessitarians."†

On this argument, I shall make but one remark, that, if it be conclusive, it only serves to identify still more the creed of the Necessitarians with that of the Spinozites. For if God certainly foresees all the future volitions of his creatures, he must, for the same reason, foresee all *his own* future volitions; and if this foreknowledge infers *a necessity* of volition in the one case, how is it possible to avoid the same inference in the other?

Mr. Belsham seems to have been *not* unaware of this inference; but shows no disposition on account of it to shrink from his principles. "It is always to be remembered, that the prescience of an *agent* necessarily includes predestination, though that of a *spectator* may not. It is nonsense to say, that a Being does not mean to bring an event to pass, which he foresees to be the certain and inevitable consequence of his own previous voluntary action." ‡

I have already mentioned the attempt of Clarke and others to show that no valid argument against the scheme of free will can be deduced from the prescience of God, even supposing *that* prescience to extend to *all* the actions of voluntary beings. On this point I must decline offering any opinion of my own, because I conceive it as placed far beyond the reach of our faculties. It is sufficient for my purpose to observe, that, if it could be demonstrated, (which, in my opinion, has not yet been done,) that the prescience of the volitions of moral agents is incompatible with the free agency of man, the logical inference would be, *not* in favor of the scheme of necessity, but that there are some events, the foreknowledge of which implies an impossibility. Shall we venture to affirm, that it exceeds the power of God to permit such a train of contingent events to take place, as his own foreknowledge shall not extend to? Does not such a proposition detract from the omnipotence of God, in the same proportion in which it aims to exalt his omniscience?

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most zealous advocates for necessity. If the principles which they have advanced be just, particularly those they have laid down on the influence of education, the moral characters of their pupils should, or rather *must*, be exemplary in no common degree.

* Elements, p. 302. † Ibid. p. 293. ‡ Ibid. p. 307.

It is a circumstance not a little curious in the history of the human mind, that, while men have been in all ages impressed with this irresistible conviction of their own free agency, they have nevertheless had a proneness not only to admit the prescience of God in its fullest extent, but to suppose that there is a *fatal and irresistible destiny* attending every individual. Traces of this opinion occur in every country of the world of which we have received any account. We meet with it among the sages of Greece, and among the ignorant and unenlightened natives of St. Kilda. The following Arabian tale, which I quote from the late Mr. Harris, will place the import of the doctrine I now allude to in a more striking light than I could possibly do by any philosophical comment.

"The Arabians tell us," says this author, "that as Solomon (whom they supposed a magician from his superior wisdom) was one day walking with a person in Palestine, his companion said to him, with horror, '*What hideous spectre is that which approaches us? I don't like his visage. Send me, I pray thee, to the remotest mountain of India.*' Solomon complied, and the very moment he was sent off, the spectre arrived. '*Solomon*,' said he, '*how came that fellow here? I was to have fetched him from the remotest mountain of India.*' Solomon answered, 'ANGEL OF DEATH, *thou wilt* FIND *him there.*'"*

The general prevalence of fatalism among unenlightened nations is the obvious effect of the insidious lessons inculcated by their religious instructers. The chief expedient employed by the priesthood in all rude countries for subjecting the minds of the people, is to impress them with a belief that it is possible, by the study of auguries, of omens, or of judicial astrology, to gratify that misguided curiosity which disposes blind mortals anxiously to tear asunder the merciful veil drawn by Providence over futurity. "Wherever superstition," says Dr. Robertson, "is so established as to form a regular system, this desire of penetrating into the secrets of futurity is connected with it. Divination becomes a religious act; and priests, as the ministers of Heaven, pretend to deliver its oracles to man. They are the only soothsayers, augurs, and magicians, who possess the sacred and important art of disclosing what is hid from other eyes." †

Between this creed and that of an inevitable fate or destiny, the connexion is necessary and obvious; and hence in every false religion the scheme of fatalism may be expected to form not only an *essential*, but the *fundamental* article. The inconsiderable influence which this theological dogma (a dogma, too, peculiarly calculated to affect and even to overwhelm the imagination) has always had in stifling the sentiment of remorse on the commission of a crime, affords a demonstrative proof of the impotence of such scholastic refinements when opposed to the feelings of nature, on a question concerning which these feelings form the only tribunal to which a legitimate appeal can be made. That a criminal, in order to alleviate the pang of remorse, may have sometimes sought for relief in this doctrine, is far from being improbable; but no man ever acted on this belief in the common concerns of human life; and, indeed, some of its most zealous partizans have acknowledged, (particularly Lord Kames,) that, were it to prevail universally as a practical principle, the business of the world could not possibly go on.

In the ancient Stoical system (as I have already observed) the doctrine of fatalism, and that of man's free agency, were both admitted as fundamental articles of belief. "By fate," says Mrs. Carter, "the Stoics seem to have understood a series of events appointed by the immutable counsels of God, or that law of his providence by

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* The following remark of M. Ancillon upon the difference between the Mahometan doctrine of destiny, and that which prevailed upon the same subject among the Ancient Greeks, appears to me just and important. "Il y a une grande différence entre le destin des Orientaux, surtout depuis que Mahomet a fait, d'une doctrine généralement repandue avant lui, un article de foi, et le Polythéisme Grec. Le Grec lutte contre le destin, et tout en succombant sous sa force, il fait preuve de liberté: le Mahumétan se résigne en aveugle avant l'événement; lors même qu'il agit, il agit en homme à qui l'action ne servira de rien. Le premier murmure contre ce pouvoir, et le supporte avec impatience; le second s'en félicite parce qu'il dispense de l'activité. Les Grecs plaçoient la force aveugle dans le destin; et la pensée qui lui résiste, et qui le combat, dans l'homme; chez les Mahumétans la force aveugle est dans l'homme; cette force n'est qu'une force passive, et la pensée est dans le destin."—*Essais Philosophiques, par Frederick Ancillon*, tom. premier, pp. 150, 151. Paris, 1817.

† History of America, Book iv.

which he governs the world. It is evident by their writings, that they meant it in no sense which interferes with the liberty of human actions." Of the truth of this remark the most satisfactory evidence is afforded by the very first sentence of the *Enchiridion* of Epictetus, in which it is explicitly stated, "That opinion, pursuit, desire, and aversion, and, in one word, whatever are our own actions are in our own power."*

Such, too, is the philosophy of Virgil:

> "Stat sua cuique dies, breve et irreparabile tempus
> Omnibus est vitæ; sed famam extendere factis
> Hoc virtutis opus." †

The doctrine, however, of fatalism, and of an inevitable destiny, must not be confounded with that of the *Divine prescience*, between which and the freedom of human actions some of our profoundest philosophers, as I have already observed, (particularly Clarke and Reid,) have labored to show that there is no inconsistency,‡ while other writers, of no less eminence, have apprehended that there is no absurdity in supposing that the Deity may, for wise purposes, have chosen to open a source of contingency in the voluntary actions of his creatures, to which no prescience can possibly extend.

Whatever opinion we may adopt on this point, the conclusions formerly stated concerning man's free agency remain unshaken. Our own free will we know by our consciousness; and we can have no evidence for any other truth so irresistible as this. On the other hand, it would unquestionably be rash and impious in us, from the fact of our own free will, to deny that our actions may be foreseen by the Deity, or to measure the Divine attributes by a standard borrowed from our imperfect faculties. The conclusion of St. Augustine on this subject is equally pious and philosophical. "Wherefore we are nowise reduced to the necessity, either by admitting the prescience of God, to deny the freedom of the human will, or by admitting the freedom of the will, to hazard the impious assertion, that the prescience of God does not extend to all future contingencies: But, on the contrary, we are disposed to embrace *both* doctrines, and with sincerity to bear testimony to their truth,—the one that our faith may be sound, the other that our *lives may be good*." §

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* That the doctrine of fatalism, however, led some of the Stoics to very impious and alarming consequences, appears from the following words, which Lucan puts into the mouth of Cato.

> "Summum, Brute, nefas civilia bella fatemur,
> Sed quo fata trahunt, virtus secura sequetur.
> *Crimen erit superis et me fecisse nocentem.*"
> Phar. ii. 254.

See also the Seventh Book of the Pharsalia, line 657.—*Copleston*, Prælect. Acad. p. 277.

† The notions of Virgil, however, on this point, as is well observed by Servius, do not seem to have been quite consistent. How are the following lines, which he applies to Dido, to be reconciled with the above passage?

> "Nam quia nec fato, meritâ nec morte peribat;
> Sed misera ante diem."—Æn. Lib. iv. l. 695.

‡ So also Milton:

> "If I foreknew,
> Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,
> Which had no less prov'd certain unforeseen."

§ Note (B.)

APPENDIX II.

(See p. 325.)

Among the later philosophers on the continent, the advocates for atheism seem to me to lay the chief stress on the old Epicurean argument, as stated by Lucretius. The sceptical suggestions on the same subject which occur in Mr. Hume's *Essay on the Idea of Necessary Connexion*, and which have given occasion to so much discussion in this country, do not seem to have ever produced any considerable impression on the French philosophers. Very few of the number, I am inclined to think, have thoroughly comprehended their import and tendency.*

> "Nam certè neque consilio primordia rerum
> Ordine se quæque, atque sagaci mente locârunt;
> Nec quos quæque darent motus pepigêre profectò;
> Sed quia multimodis, multis, mutata, per omne
> Ex infinito vexantur percita plagis,
> Omne genus motûs et cœtûs experiundo,
> Tandem deveniunt in taleis disposituras,
> Qualibus hæc rebus consistit summa creata." †

And still more explicitly in the following lines:—

> "Nam cum respicias immensi temporis omne
> Præteritum spatium; tum motus materiaï
> Multimodi quam sint; facile hoc accredere possis,
> Semina sæpe in eodem, ut nunc sunt, ordine pôsta." ‡

To this argument Diderot repeatedly refers in his voluminous writings; and even sometimes steps out of his way to introduce it; a remarkable instance of which occurs in his *Traité du Beau*, and also in the article *Beau* in the *Encyclopédie*.

"Le beau n'est pas toujours l'ouvrage d'une cause intelligente; le mouvement établit souvent, soit dans un être considéré solitairement, soit entre plusieurs êtres comparés entr'eux, une multitude prodigieuse de rapports surprenans. Les cabinets d'histoire naturelle en offrent un grand nombre d'exemples. Les rapports sont alors des résultats de combinaisons fortuites, du moins par rapport à nous. La nature imite, en se jouant, dans cent occasions, les productions d'art; et l'on pourroit demander, je ne dis pas si ce philosophe qui fut jeté par une tempête sur les bords d'une île inconnue, avoit raison de s'écrier, à la vue de quelques figures de géométrie; *Courage, mes amis, voici des pas d'hommes;* mais combien il faudroit marquer de rapports dans un être, pour avoir une certitude complète qu'il est l'ouvrage d'un artiste § (en quelle occasion, un seul défaut de symmétrie prouveroit plus que toute somme donnée de rapports); comment sont entr'eux le tems de

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* According to De Gérando, (Hist. Comparée, Tome II. pp. 151, 152,) Mendelsohn was the first who thought of opposing Hume's Scepticism about Cause and Effect, by considerations drawn from the calculus of probabilities. This statement is confirmed by Lacroix, who refers for further information to Mendelsohn's Treatise on Evidence, which obtained the prize from the Academy of Berlin in 1763. De Gérando himself, in his *Traité des Signes et de l'Art de Penser*, (published l'an viii.) has adopted the same view of the subject, without being then aware (as he assures us himself) that he had been anticipated in this speculation by Mendelsohn. (Ibid. p. 155.) Lacroix remarks the coincidence of opinion of these different authors, with some hints suggested by Helvetius, in a note on the first chapter of the first discourse, in his work entitled *l'Esprit*.—(*Traité Elémentaire du Calcul des Probabilités*.)

† Lucret. Lib. i. l. 1020.

‡ Lucret. Lib. iii. l. 867.

§ Is not this precisely the sophistical mode of questioning known among logicians by the name of *Sorites* or *Acervus?* "Vitiosum sane," says Cicero, "et captiosum genus."—*Acad. Quæst.* Lib. iv. xvi.

l'action de la cause fortuite et les rapports observés dans les effets produits; et si (à l'exception des œuvres du Tout-puissant) il y a des cas où le nombre des rapports ne puisse jamais être compensé par celui des jets." This passage forms the conclusion of the article *Beau* in the French *Encyclopédie*, and, notwithstanding the parenthetical *salvo* in the last clause, the drift of the argument is sufficiently obvious.

In one of the articles, however, of his *Pensées Philosophiques*, Diderot has explained his meaning on this subject much more fully.

" J'ouvre les cahiers d'un philosophe célèbre, et je lis : ' Athées, je vous accorde que le mouvement est essentiel à la matière; qu'en concluez-vous? que le monde résulte du jet fortuit des atômes? j'aimerois autant que vous me dissiez que l'Iliade d'Homère ou la Henriade de Voltaire est un résultat de jets fortuits de caractères.' —" Je me garderai bien de faire ce raisonnement à un Athée. Cette comparaison lui donneroit beau jeu. Selon les lois de l'analyse des sorts, me diroit-il, je ne dois point être surpris qu'une chose arrive, lorsqu'elle est possible, et que la difficulté de l'événement est compensée par la quantité des jets. Il y a tel nombre de coups dans lesquels je gagerois avec avantage d'amener cent mille six à-la-fois avec cent mille dez. Quelle que fût la somme finie de caractères avec laquelle on me proposeroit d'engendrer fortuitement l'Iliade, il y a telle somme finie de jets qui me rendroit la proposition avantageuse; mon avantage seroit même infinie, si la quantité de jets accordée étoit infinie." *

The very same reasoning, in substance, has been since brought forward by different French mathematicians; among others, by the justly celebrated Laplace, in his Philosophical Essay on Probabilities. I shall quote at length one of his most remarkable reasonings.

" Au milieu des causes variables et inconnues que nous comprenons sous le nom de *hazard*, et qui rendent incertaine et irrégulière la marche des événemens; on voit naître à mesure qu'ils se multiplient, une régularité frappante qui semble tenir à un dessein, et que l'on a considérée comme une preuve de la Providence qui gouverne le monde. Mais en y réfléchissant, on reconnoît bientôt que cette régularité n'est que le developpement des possibilités respectives des événemens simples qui doivent se présenter plus souvent lorsqu'ils sont plus probables. Concevons, par exemple, une urne qui renferme des boules blanches et des boules noires; et supposons qu'à chaque fois que l'on en tire une boule, on la remette dans l'urne pour proceder à un nouveau tirage. Le rapport du nombre des boules blanches extraites, au nombre des boules noires extraites, sera le plus souvent très irrégulier dans les premiers tirages; mais les causes variables de cette irrégularité, produisent des effets alternativement favorables et contraires à la marche régulière des événemens, et qui se détruisant mutuellement dans l'ensemble d'un grand nombre de tirages, laissent de plus en plus apperçevoir le rapport des boules blanches aux boules noires contenues dans l'urne, ou les possibilités respectives d'en extraire une boule blanche ou une boule noire à chaque tirage. De la résulte le théoréme suivant.

" La probabilité que le rapport du nombre des boules blanches extraites, au nombre total des boules sorties, ne s'écarte pas au delà d'un intervalle donné, du rapport du nombre des boules blanches, au nombre total des boules contenues dans l'urne, approche indefiniment de la certitude, par la multiplication indéfinie des événemens, quelque petit que l'on suppose cet intervalle. * * *

" On peut tirer du théorème précédent, cette conséquence qui doit être regardée comme une loi générale, savoir, que les rapports des effets de la nature, sont à fort

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* Pensées Philosophiques, xxi. See first volume of his work. Naigeon's edition. With respect to the passages here extracted from Diderot, it is worthy of observation, that, if the atheistical argument from chances be conclusive in its application to that order of things which we behold, it is not less conclusive when applied to every other possible combination of atoms which imagination can conceive; and affords a mathematical proof, that the fables of Grecian mythology, the tales of the Genii, and the dreams of the Rosicrucians, *may*, or rather *must*, all of them be somewhere realized in the infinite extent of the universe; a proposition which, if true, would destroy every argument for or against any given system of opinions founded on the reasonableness or the unreasonableness of the tenets involved in it; and would, of consequence, lead to the subversion of the whole frame of the human understanding.

I have pursued this argument further in the Dissertation prefixed to the Encyclopædia Britannica, Part ii. pp. 241, 242, 243.

peu près constans, quand ces effets sont considérés en grand nombre. Ainsi malgré la variété des années, la somme des productions pendant un nombre d'années considérable, est sensiblement la même; en sorte que l'homme, par une utile prévoyance, peut se mettre à l'abri de l'irrégularité des saisons, en répandant également sur tous les temps, les biens que la nature distribue d'une manière inégale. Je n'excepte pas de la loi précédente, les effets dus aux causes morales. Le rapport des naissances annuelles à la population, et celui des mariages aux naissances, n'éprouvent que de très-petites variations: à Paris, le nombre des naissances annuelles a toujours été le même à peu près; et j'ai ouï dire qu'à la poste, dans les temps ordinaires, le nombre des lettres mises au rebut par les défauts des adresses, change peu, chaque année; ce qui a été pareillement observé à Londres.

"Il suit encore de ce théorème, que dans une série d'événemens, indéfiniment prolongée, l'action des causes régulières et constantes doit l'emporter à la longue, sur celle des causes irrégulières.

* * * * *

"Si l'on applique ce théorème au rapport des naissances des garçons, à celles des filles, observé dans les diverses parties de l'Europe; on trouve que ce rapport, partout à peu près égal à celui de 22 à 21, indique avec une extrême probabilité, une plus grande facilité dans les naissances des garçons. En considérant ensuite qu'il est le même à Naples qu'à Pétersbourg, on verra qu'à cet égard, l'influence du climat est insensible. On pouvoit donc soupçonner contre l'opinion commune, que cette supériorité des naissances masculines subsiste dans l'Orient même. J'avais en conséquence invité les savans Français envoyés en Egypte, à s'occuper de cette question intéressante; mais la difficulté d'obtenir des renseignemens précis sur les naissances ne leur a pas permis de la résoudre. Heureusement, Humboldt n'a point négligé cet objet dans l'immensité des choses nouvelles qu'il a observées et recueillies en Amérique, avec tant de sagacité, de constance et de courage. Il a retrouvé entre les tropiques le même rapport des naissances des garçons à celles des filles, que l'on observe à Paris; ce qui doit faire regarder la supériorité des naissances masculines comme une loi générale de l'espèce humaine. Les lois que suivent à cet égard les divers espèces d'animaux, me paraissent dignes de l'attention des naturalistes." *

From these quotations, it appears that the constancy in the proportion of births to the whole population of a country, in that of births to marriages, and in that of male children to females, are considered by Laplace as facts of the same kind, and to be accounted for in the same way with the very narrow limits within which the number of misdirected letters in the General Post-Office of Paris varies from year to year. The same thing, he tells us, has been observed in the Dead-Letter Office at London. But as he mentions both these last facts merely on the authority of a *hearsay*, I do not know to what degree of credit they are entitled, and I shall therefore leave them entirely out of our consideration in the present argument. The meaning which Laplace wished to convey by this comparison cannot be mistaken.

Among the different facts in political arithmetic here alluded to by Laplace, that of the constancy in the proportion of male to female births (which he himself pronounces to be a *general law of our species*) is the most analogous to the example of the urn containing a mixture of white and of black balls, from which he deduces his general theorem. I shall accordingly select this in preference to the others. The intelligent reader will at once perceive that the same reasoning is equally applicable to all of them.

Let us suppose, then, that the white balls in Laplace's urn represent male infants, and the black balls female infants, upon which supposition, the longer that the operation (described by Laplace) of drawing and returning the balls is continued, the nearer will the proportion of white to black balls approach to that of 22 to 21. What inference (according to Laplace's own theorem) ought we to deduce from this, but that the *whole* number of white balls in the urn is to the *whole* number of black balls in the same proportion of 22 to 21; or, in other words, that this is the proportion of the whole number of unborn males to the whole number of unborn females in the womb of futurity? And yet this inference is regarded by Laplace as a proof that the approximation to equality in the number of the two sexes affords no evidence of foresight or design.

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* Essai Philosophique sur les Probabilités, par M. le Comte Laplace. 3me Ed. pp. 73, 74, 75, 76. See Note (C.)

"La constance de la supériorité des naissances des garçons sur celles des filles, à Paris et à Londres, depuis qu'on les observe, a paru à quelques savans, être une preuve *de la Providence* sans laquelle ils ont pensé que les causes irrégulières qui troublent sans cesse la marche des événemens, auroit du plusieurs fois rendre les naissances annuelles des filles, supérieures à celle des garçons.

"Mais cette preuve est un nouvel exemple de l'abus que l'on a fait si souvent des causes finales qui disparaissent toujours par un examen approfondi des questions, lorsqu'on a les données nécessaires pour les résoudre. La constance dont il s'agit, est un résultat des CAUSES REGULIERES qui donnent la supériorité aux naissances des garçons, et qui l'emportent sur les anomalies dues au hazard, lorsque le nombre des naissances annuelles est considérables." *

With the proposition announced in the last sentence I perfectly agree. That the constancy of the results in the instance now in question depends on *regular causes*, (which in this case is merely a synonymous expression with *general laws*,) the most zealous advocates for a designing cause will be the most forward to admit; and if Laplace means nothing more than to say, that the uniformity of the effect, when observed on a large scale, may be sufficiently explained without supposing the miraculous interference of Providence *in each individual birth*, the question does not seem worthy of a controversy. If the person who put the white and black balls into the urn had wished to secure the actual result of the drawing, what other means could he have employed for the purpose, than to adjust to each other the relative proportions of these balls *in the whole number of both?* Could any proof more demonstrative be given, that this was the very end he had in view?

Nor do I think that the authors whom Laplace opposes ever meant to dispute the operation of these *regular causes*. Dr. Arbuthnot, certainly, one of the earliest writers in this country, who brought forward the regular proportion between male and female births as an argument in favor of wise design, not only agrees in this point with Laplace, but has proposed a physical theory to account for this regularity. The theory is indeed too ludicrous to deserve a moment's consideration: but it at least shows that Laplace has advanced nothing in favor of his conclusions, which had not been previously granted by his adversaries.

APPENDIX III.

THE following strictures on the Philosophical Essay of Laplace have all a reference, more or less direct, to the argument stated in the foregoing Appendix.

Under the general title of the doctrine of *Probabilities*, two very different things are confounded together by Laplace, as well as by many other writers of an earlier date. The one is the purely mathematical theory of chances; the other, the inductive anticipations of future events deduced from observations on the past course of nature. The calculations about dice furnish the simplest of all examples of the first sort of theory. The conclusions to which they lead are as rigorously exact as any other arithmetical propositions; amounting to nothing more than a numerical statement of the ways in which a given event *may* happen, compared with those in which it *may not* happen. Thus, in the case of a single die, the chance that *ace* shall turn up at the first throw, is to the chances against that event as one to five. The more complicated cases of the problem all depend on the application of the same fundamental principle. "This principle," as Condorcet has well remarked, "is only a definition (une verité de définition;) and consequently the calculations founded on it are all rigorously true." †

To this theory of chances Laplace labors, through the whole of his work, to assimilate all the other cases in which mathematics are applied to the *calculus* of

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* Essai Philosophique sur les Probabilités, par M. le Comte Laplace. 3me Ed. pp. 84, 85.

† Essai sur l'Application de l'Analyse à la Probabilité des Décisions rendues à la pluralité des voix. Disc. Prélim. p. 11.

probabilities; and I have no doubt that he would have readily subscribed to the following proposition of Condorcet, although I do not recollect that he has any where sanctioned it expressly by his authority. "Le motif de croire que sur dix millions de boules blanches melées avec une noire ce ne sera point la noire que je tirerai du premier coup, est de la même nature que le motif de croire que le soleil ne manquera pas de se lever demain; et les deux opinions ne diffèrent entr'elles que par le plus et le moins de probabilités."

The only writers, as far as I know, by whom this position of Condorcet has yet been controverted, are MM. Prévost and L'Huillier, of Geneva, in a very able paper published in the Memoirs of the Royal Academy of Berlin for the year 1796.* After quoting from Condorcet the passage I have transcribed above, these learned and ingenious philosophers proceed thus:—

"La persuasion analogique qu'éprouve tout homme de voir se répéter un événement naturel (tel que le lever du soleil) est d'un genre différent de la persuasion représentée par une fraction dans la Théorie des Probabilités. Celle-ci peut lui être ajoutée, mais l'une peut exister sans l'autre. Elles dépendent de deux ordres de facultés différents. Un enfant, un animal éprouve la première, et ne forme aucun calcul explicite, ni même implicite. Il n'y a aucune dépendance nécessaire entre ces deux persuasions. Celle que le calcul apprécie est raisonnée et même jusqu'á un certain point artificielle. L'autre est d'instinct et naturelle. Elle dépend de quelques facultés intellectuelles dont l'analyse n'est pas facile, et probablement en très-grande partie du principe de la liason des idées.

"Je veux prouver maintenant, que tout cet appareil de méthode, si beau, et si utile, par lequel on arrive à calculer les probabilités des causes par ses effets, suppose une estimation antérieure de cette même probabilité; et qu'en particulier dans toutes les applications intéressantes qu'on peut faire de ce calcul, nous sommes nécessairement guidés par un instinct de persuasion, inappréciable en degré, et que tous nos raisonnemens sur cet objet dependent de notre confiance en un principe de croyance que le calcul des probabilités ne peut estimer.

"* * * * Je dis donc, qu'il y a dans l'homme un principe (qu'on peut nommer instinct de croyance) que suppose toute application du calcul des probabilités. Tant qu'on raisonne dans l'abstrait, on n'est point appelé à se rendre compte des raisons sur lesquelles on fonde l'estimation de la probabilité d'une chance. Mais dans tous les cas concrets ou particuliers, on ne peut déterminer cette probabilité que par voie d'expérience. Or les cas passés n'étant pas liés aux cas à venir, nous ne les envisageons comme devant donner les mêmes resultats, que par le sentiment sourd irrésistible que nous fait admettre la constance des lois de la nature. Si l'on prend l'exemple d'un dé, on verra que pour arriver à lui donner la construction que le joueur a en vue, l'artiste finalement n'a pu se guider que par quelques expériences antérieures sur de tels instrumens aléatoires, et sur celui-là en particulier. Lors donc qu'il espère les mêmes effets, il se fonde sur une prévoyance dont la raison ne peut être apprecié par le calcul. Et c'est en vain qu'on voudroit sortir de ce cercle, en remontant de cause en cause; car finalement, toute probabilité qu'on voudra estimer Stochastiquement, se reduira à cet emblême. On détermine la probabilité de vie par des tables empiriques; et il en est de même de la probabilité des phénomènes météorologiques, et autres."

Dr. Price, in his Dissertation on Historical Evidence, and also in an Essay published in Vol. LIII. of the Philosophical Transactions, has fallen into a train of thinking exactly similar to that quoted above from Condorcet.† The passage here referred to is well worthy of perusal; but, on the slightest examination, it must appear to every intelligent reader to be liable to the very same objections which have been so strongly urged against Condorcet's principles by MM. Prévost and L'Huillier.

"We trust experience," says Dr. Price, "and expect that the future should resemble the past in the course of nature, *for the very same reason* that, supposing ourselves otherwise in the dark, we should conclude that a die which has turned an ace oftenest in past trials is mostly marked with aces, and consequently should expect that

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* As I have not access at present to the paper referred to, I am somewhat doubtful if my memory may not have deceived me with respect to the volume of the Berlin Memoirs in which it appeared. The extracts, which I copy from a manuscript of my own, are, I trust, substantially correct.

† See Price's Dissertations, p. 388 *et seq.*

it will go on to turn the same number oftenest in future trials." *—"And so far is it from being true, that the understanding is *not* the faculty which teaches us to rely on experience, that it is capable of determining *in all cases* what conclusions ought to be drawn from it, and what *precise degree* of confidence should be placed in it." †

Nothing can be more evident than this, that it is not upon any *reasoning* of this sort that children proceed, when they anticipate the continuance of those laws of Nature, a knowledge of which is indispensably necessary for the preservation of their animal existence. Mr. Hume, although he plainly leaned to the opinion, that this anticipation may be accounted for by the association of ideas, has yet, with the most philosophical propriety, given it the name of *an instinct*, inasmuch as it manifests itself in infants long before the dawn of reason, and is as evidently the result of an arrangement of Nature, as if it were implanted immediately in their frame by her own hand. It is indeed an instinct common to man and to the brute creation.

That we are able, in many cases, to calculate, with mathematical precision, the probability of future events is indisputable; but so far is this from affording any argument against the instinctive anticipation, the existence of which Dr. Price denies, that all these calculations take for granted (as M. Prévost has observed) that uniformity in the course of Nature which we are thus led to anticipate. The *calculations*, it is true, imply at every step the exercise of the understanding; but that no process of the understanding can account for the origin of the fundamental assumption on which they proceed, has been shown by Mr. Hume (according to my judgment) with demonstrative evidence.

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* Price's Dissertations, p. 392. † Ibid. p. 398.

NOTES

AND

ILLUSTRATIONS.

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

Note (A.) page 30.

THERE is a remarkable coincidence between this passage of Wollaston and the following one from Montaigne's Essays.

"Let us pry a little narrowly into, and in God's name examine upon what basis we erect this glory and reputation for which the world is turned topsy-turvy: Wherein do we place this renown, that we hunt after with so much trouble? It is in conclusion Peter or William that carries it, takes it into his possession, and whom it only concerns. O what a courageous faculty is hope, that in a mortal subject and in a moment proceeds to usurp infinity and immensity, and to supply her master's indigence at her pleasure with all things he can imagine or desire! Nature has given us this passion for a pretty toy to play withal. And this Peter or William, what is it but a sound, when all is said and done? or three or four strokes of a pen, so easy to be varied in the first place, that I would fain know to whom is to be attributed the glory of so many victories, to Guesquin, to Glesquin, or to Guasquin. . . . . The question is, which of these letters ought to be rewarded for so many sieges, battles, imprisonnments, and services done to the crown of France by this her famous Constable?"

"Secondly, these are dashes of the pen common to a thousand people. How many persons are there in all races of the same name and surname! . . . Who hinders my groom from calling himself Pompey the Great? But after all, what virtue or what springs are there that fixed upon my deceased groom, or the other Pompey who had his head cut off in Egypt, this glorious renown, or these so much honored flourishes of the pen, so as to be of any advantage to them?

'Id cinerem aut manes credis curare sepultos?'"*

Fontenelle, in his Dialogues of the Dead (see Dialogue between Berenice and Cosmo II. of Medicis), has taken up the same argument. "Les hommes sont plaisans; ils ne peuvent se dérober à la mort, et ils tachent à lui dérober deux ou trois syllabes qui leur appartiennent. Voilà une belle chicane qu'ils s'avisent de lui faire. Ne vaudroit-il pas mieux qu'ils consentissent de bonne grace à mourir, eux et leurs noms? . . . . . Du moins, ce qui peut manquer à nos noms, c'est une mort, pour ainsi dire, grammaticale; quelques changemens de lettres les mettent en état de ne pouvoir plus servir qu'à donner de l'embarras aux sçavans," &c. &c.

A thought substantially the same with that of Wollaston occurs in Cowley's ode entitled *Life and Fame*.

"Great Cæsar's self a higher place does claim
In the seraphic entity of fame.
He, since that toy his death,
Does fill each mouth and breath.
'T is true, the two immortal syllables remain;
But oh ye learned men explain,
What essence—substance—what hypostasis
In five poor letters is?
In those alone does the great Cæsar live.
'T is all the conquer'd world could give."

Notwithstanding the merit of these lines, I should hardly have thought it worth while to quote them, if Dr. Hurd (a critic of no common ingenuity as well as learn-

* Cotton's Translation.

ing) had not shown, by his comment upon them, how completely he had misapprehended the reasoning both of the poet and of the philosopher.

"This lively ridicule," says Hurd, "on posthumous fame is well enough placed in a poem or declamation; but we are a little surprised to find so grave a writer as Wollaston diverting himself with it. In reality," says he, "the man is not known ever the more to posterity, because his name is transmitted to them. *He* does not live, because his *name* does. When it is said 'Julius Cæsar subdued Gaul,' &c. &c. the sophistry is apparent. Put Cato in the place of Cæsar, and then see whether that great man do not *live* in his name *substantially*, that is, to good purpose, if the impression which these two *immortal syllables* make on the mind be of use in exciting posterity, or any one man to the love and imitation of Cato's virtue."—(*Hurd's Cowley*, V. I. p. 179.)

In this remark Hurd plainly proceeds on the supposition, that Wollaston's *sophistry* is directed against the *utility* of the love of posthumous glory, whereas the only point in dispute relates to the *origin* of this principle, which Wollaston seems to have thought, if it could not be resolved into the rational motive of self-love, must be the illegitimate and contemptible offspring of our own stupidity and folly.

How very different must Cowley's feelings have been when he wrote the metaphysical ode referred to by Hurd, from those which inspired that fine burst of juvenile emotion, which forms the *exordium* to his Poetical Works!

"What shall I do to be for ever known,
And make the age to come my own?
I shall, like beasts or common people, die,
Unless you write my elegy."
* * * *
"What sound is 't strikes mine ear?
Sure I fame's trumpet hear.
It sounds like the last trumpet, for it can
Raise up the buried man."

Note (B.) page 88.

Although no English version can possibly do justice to the conciseness and spirit of Pliny's own language, I shall, for the sake of my unlearned readers, quote the anecdote referred to in the text, in the admirable translation of Mr. Melmoth.

"I have frequently observed, that amongst the noble actions and remarkable sayings of distinguished persons, in either sex, those which have been most celebrated have not always been the most illustrious; and I am confirmed in this opinion by a conversation I had yesterday with Fannia. This lady is grand-daughter to that celebrated Arria, who animated her husband to meet death by her own glorious example. She informed me of several particulars relating to Arria, not less heroical than this famous action of hers, though less taken notice of, which, I am persuaded, will raise your admiration as much as they did mine. Her husband, Cæcina Pætus, and his son, were both at the same time attacked with a dangerous illness, of which the son died. This youth, who had a most beautiful person and amiable behaviour, was not less endeared to his parents by his virtues than by the ties of affection. His mother managed his funeral so privately, that Pætus did not know of his death. Whenever she came to his bed-chamber, she pretended her son was better; and as often as he inquired after his health, would answer that he had rested well, or had eaten with an appetite. When she found she could no longer restrain her grief, but her tears were gushing out, she would leave the room, and having given vent to her passion, return again with dry eyes, as if she had dismissed every sentiment of sorrow at her entrance. The action was no doubt truly noble, when, drawing the dagger, she plunged it in her breast, and then presented it to her husband, with that ever memorable, I had almost said divine expression,—'Pætus, it is not painful.' It must, however, be considered, when she spoke and acted thus, she had the prospect of immortal glory before her eyes to encourage and support her. But was it not something much greater, without the view of such powerful motives, to hide her tears, to conceal her grief, and cheerfully seem the mother when she was so no more?"

Note (C.) page 214.

I shall throw together in this note, without much regard to order of connexion, a few slight observations on detached passages of Mr. Smith's theory. Some of these observations may, I hope, be useful in illustrating more fully certain phenomena referred by him, rather too exclusively, to the principle of sympathy or fellow feeling.

In proof of the pleasure annexed to mutual sympathy, Mr. Smith remarks (Vol. I. p. 16, 6th Edit.) "that a man is mortified when, after having endeavoured to divert the company, he looks around and sees that nobody laughs at his jest but himself." It may be doubted, however, if in this case a disappointed sympathy be the chief cause of his uneasiness. Various other circumstances undoubtedly conspire, particularly the censure which the silence of the company conveys of his taste and judgment, together with the proof it exhibits of their sullenness and want of good humor.

"The pleasure, too, which," according to Mr. Smith, (Ibid.) "we receive from reading to a stranger a poem whose effect on ourselves has been destroyed by repetition," may be explained without any refinement about *sympathy*, by the satisfaction we always feel in communicating pleasure to another, combined with the flattering though indirect testimony paid to the justness of our taste, by its coincidence with that of an individual whose judgment we respect. The sympathy of an acknowledged fool would certainly be in the same circumstances a source of mortification.

In mentioning these considerations, I do not mean to dispute that there is an exquisite pleasure arising from mutual sympathy; but only to suggest, that Mr. Smith has ascribed to this principle solely, various phenomena, in accounting for which, other causes appear to be no less deserving of attention.

The versatile and accommodating manners which Mr. Smith has so beautifully described in various passages of his *theory*, may be assumed from different motives,—in some men, from a desire to promote the happiness of those around them; and where this is the case, it is unquestionably one of the most amiable and meritorious forms in which benevolence can appear, and contributes more by its daily and constant operation to increase the comfort of human life, than those splendid exertions of virtue, which we are so seldom called upon to make. In other men, in whom the benevolent affections are not so strong, it may proceed chiefly from a view to their own tranquillity and amusement, and may render them agreeable and harmless companions, without giving them any claim to the appellation of *virtuous*. In many it arises from views of self-interest and ambition; and in such men, whatever pleasure we may have derived from their society, these qualities never fail to inspire universal distrust and dislike, as soon as they are known to be the real motives of that pliancy and versatility with which we were at first captivated. It would appear, therefore, that the accommodating temper, where it is approved as morally *right*, is not approved on its own account, but as an expression of a *benevolent* disposition. From the combined efforts of the actor and of the spectator towards a mutual sympathy, Mr. Smith endeavours to trace the origin of two different sets of virtues. "Upon the effort of the spectator to enter into the situation of the person principally concerned, and to raise his sympathetic emotions to a level with the emotions of the actor, are founded the gentle, the amiable virtues, the virtues of candid condescension and indulgent humanity. Upon the effort of the person principally concerned, to lower his own emotions so as to correspond as nearly as possible with those of the spectator, are founded the great, the awful, and respectable virtues, the virtues of self-denial, of self-government, of that command of the passions, which subjects all movements of our nature to what our own dignity and honor, and the propriety of our own conduct require." If the word *qualities* were substituted for *virtues*, I agree in general with this doctrine. The mode of expression, however, certainly requires correction. "Candid condescension" and "indulgent humanity" are always amiable; and when they really proceed from a disposition habitually benevolent, are with great propriety called *virtues*. "Self-denial and self-government" are always *respectable*, and sometimes *awful* qualities; because they indicate a force of mind which few men possess; but it depends on the *motives* from which they are exercised, whether they indicate a virtuous or a vicious character.

As a further illustration of the foregoing doctrine, Mr. Smith considers particularly the degrees of the different passions which are consistent with propriety, and endeavours to show, that in every case it is decent or indecent to express a passion strongly, according as mankind are disposed or not disposed to sympathize with it. "It is unbecoming, for example, to express strongly any of those passions which arise from a certain condition of the body; because other men, who are not in the same condition, cannot be expected to sympathize with them. It is unbecoming to cry out with bodily pain, because the sympathy felt by the spectator bears no proportion to the acuteness of what is felt by the sufferer. The case is somewhat similar with

those passions which take their origin from a particular turn or habit of the imagination."

All violent expressions of such passions are undoubtedly offensive, and good breeding dictates that they should be restrained; but *not* because the spectator finds it difficult to enter into the situation of the person principally concerned; perhaps the opposite reason would be nearer the truth. To eat voraciously in the presence of a company who have already dined, would be obviously indecent; but, I apprehend, not so much so as to eat even moderately in presence of one whom we knew to be hungry, and who was not permitted to share in the repast. With respect to *bodily pain*, it appears to me that there is no calamity whatever which so completely interests the spectator, or with which his sympathy is so acute and lively. It is on this account, that a steady composure under it, while it indicates the manly quality of self-command, has something in it peculiarly amiable, when we suppose that it proceeds in any degree from a tenderness for the feelings of others. In many surgical operations it is probable that the imagination of the pain exceeds the reality; and there cannot be a doubt, that where the patient is the object of our love, the sufferings which *he* feels require less fortitude than ours.

"In the case of the unsocial passions of hatred and resentment, the sympathy of the spectator is divided between the person who feels the passion and the person who is the object of it. We are concerned for both, and our fear for what the one may suffer damps our resentment for what the other has suffered. Hence the imperfect degree in which we sympathize with such passions; and the propriety, when under their influence, of moderating their expression to a much greater degree than in the case of any other emotions."

Abstracting from all considerations of this kind, satisfactory reasons may be given for our listening with caution to the dictates of *resentment*, when we ourselves are the sufferers. Experience must soon satisfy us how apt this passion is to blind the judgment, and to exaggerate in our estimation the injury we have received; and how certainly we lay in matter for future remorse for our cooler hours, if we obey its first suggestions. A wise man, therefore, learns to delay forming his resolutions till his passion has in some degree subsided;—*not* in order to obtain the sympathy of other men, but in order to secure the approbation of his own conscience. If he conceives to himself what conduct the impartial spectator will approve of, it is merely as an expedient to divest himself of the partialities of self-love; and when he acts agreeably to what he supposes to be, on this occasion, the unbiassed judgment of spectators, his satisfaction arises *not* from the possession of their sympathy, but from a consciousness that he has done his best to ascertain what was *right*, and has regulated his conduct accordingly.

"Where there is no envy in the case, our propensity to sympathize with *joy* is much stronger than our propensity to sympathize with sorrow."

"It is on account of this dull sensibility to the afflictions of others, that magnanimity, amidst great distress, always appears so divinely graceful."

If this were true, would it not follow that the admiration of heroic magnanimity would be in proportion to the insensibility of the spectator?

"It is because mankind are more disposed to court the favor, to comply with the humors, and to judge with indulgence of the actions of the prosperous, than with those of the unfortunate, that we make parade of our riches, and conceal our poverty."—"It is the misfortunes of kings alone," Mr. Smith adds, "which afford the proper subjects for tragedy."

Of this last proposition I confess I have some doubts, at least to the extent in which it is here stated; and I am inclined to think that in those cases where it holds, it may be easily accounted for on more obvious principles. By far the greater number of tragedies are founded on historical facts; and history records only the transactions of men in elevated stations. But even in *these* tragedies the most interesting personages are frequently domestics or captives. The old shepherd in *Douglas* is surely a more interesting character than Lord Randolph. And for my own part I am not ashamed to confess, that I have shed more tears at some *Tragédies bourgeoises* and *Comédies larmoyantes* of very inferior merit, than were ever extorted from me by the exquisite poetry of Corneille, Racine, or Voltaire.

The fortunes of the great, indeed, interest us more than those of men in inferior stations. But for this there are various causes, independent of that assigned by Mr. Smith. 1. Their destiny involves the fortunes of many, and frequently affects the public interest. 2. Their situation points them out to public attention, and renders them subjects of general and daily conversation; and, accordingly, we may remark a curiosity perfectly analogous to that which the history of the great excites, with

respect to the biography of all men who have been long and constantly in the view of the world. The trifling anecdotes in the life of *Quin* or *Garrick* find as many readers as the important events connected with the history of Frederick the Great.

In my Account of the Life and Writings of Mr. Smith, I observed, that, according to the learned translator of Aristotle's Ethics and Politics, "the general idea which runs through Mr. Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments was obviously borrowed from the following passage of Polybius. 'From the union of the two sexes, to which all are naturally inclined, children are born. When any of these, therefore, being arrived at perfect age, instead of yielding suitable returns of gratitude and assistance to those by whom they have been bred, on the contrary, attempt to injure them by words or actions, it is manifest that those who behold the wrong, after having also seen the sufferings and the anxious cares that were sustained by the parents in the nourishment and education of their children, must be greatly offended and displeased at such proceeding. For man, who, among all the various kinds of animals, is alone endowed with the faculty of reason, cannot, like the rest, pass over such actions, but will make reflection on what he sees; and, comparing likewise, the future with the present, will not fail to express his indignation at this injurious treatment; to which, as he foresees, he may also at some time be exposed. Thus again, when any one who has been succoured by another in the time of danger, instead of showing the like kindness to this benefactor, endeavours at any time to destroy or hurt him, it is certain that all men must be shocked by such ingratitude, through sympathy with the resentment of their neighbour, and from an apprehension also that the case may be their own. And from hence arises in the mind of every man, a certain *notion* of the nature and force of duty, in which consists both the beginning and the end of justice. In like manner, the man who, in defence of others, is seen to throw himself the foremost into every danger, and even to sustain the fury of the fiercest animals, never fails to obtain the loudest acclamations of applause and veneration from all the multitude, while he who shows a different conduct is pursued with censure and reproach. And thus it is that the people begin to discern the nature of things honorable and base, and in what consists the difference between them; and to perceive that the former, on account of the advanage that attends them, are fit to be admired and imitated, and the latter to be detested and avoided.'"

"The doctrine," says Dr. Gillies, "contained in this passage is expanded by Dr. Smith into a theory of Moral Sentiments. But he departs from *his author* in placing the perception of right and wrong in sentiment or feeling, ultimately and simply. Polybius, on the contrary, maintains with Aristotle, that these notions arise from reason or intellect operating on affection or appetite; or, in other words, that the moral faculty is a compound, and may be resolved into two simpler principles of the mind."—(*Gillies's Aristot.* Vol. I. pp. 302, 303. Second Edit.)

The only expression I object to in the preceding sentences, is the phrase *his author*, which has the appearance of insinuating a charge of plagiarism against Mr. Smith; a charge which, I am confident, he did not deserve, and to which the above extract does not, in my opinion, afford any plausible color. It exhibits, indeed, an instance of a curious coincidence between two philosophers in their views of the same subject, and as such I have no doubt that Mr. Smith himself would have remarked it, had it occurred to his memory when he was writing his book. Of such accidental coincidences between different minds, examples present themselves every day to those, who, after having drawn from their internal resources all the lights they could supply on a particular question, have the curiosity to compare their own conclusions with those of their predecessors. And it is extremely worthy of observation, that, in proportion as any conclusion approaches to the truth, the number of previous approximations to it may be reasonably expected to be multiplied.

In the instance before us, however, the question about originality is of little or no moment, for the peculiar merit of Mr. Smith's work does not lie in his general principle, but in the skilful use he has made of it to give a systematical arrangement to the most important discussions and doctrines of ethics. In this point of view, the Theory of Moral Sentiments may be justly regarded as one of the most original efforts of the human mind in that branch of science to which it relates; and even if we were to suppose that it was first suggested to the author by a remark of which the world was in possession for two thousand years before, this very circumstance would only reflect a stronger lustre on the novelty of his design, and on the invention and taste displayed in its execution.

In the same work I have observed, that, "in studying the connexion and filiation of successive theories, when we are at a loss in any instance for a link to complete the continuity of philosophical speculation, it seems much more reasonable to search for it in the systems of the immediately preceding period, and in the inquiries which *then* occupied the public attention, than in detached sentences, or accidental expressions gleaned from the relics of distant ages. It is thus only that we can hope to seize the precise point of view in which an author's subject first presented itself to his attention, and to account to our own satisfaction, from the particular aspect under which he saw it, for the subsequent direction which was given to his curiosity. In following such a plan, our object is not to detect plagiarisms, which we suppose men of genius to have intentionally concealed, but to fill up an apparent chasm in the history of science, by laying hold of the thread which insensibly guided the mind from one station to another." Upon these principles our attention is naturally directed on the present occasion to the inquiries of Dr. Butler, in preference to those of any other author, ancient or modern. At the time when Mr. Smith began his literary career, Butler unquestionably stood highest among the ethical writers of England; and his works appear to have produced a still deeper and more lasting impression in Scotland, than in the other part of the island. Of the esteem in which they were held by Lord Kames and Mr. Hume, satisfactory documents remain in their published letters; nor were his writings less likely to attract the notice of Mr. Smith, in consequence of the pointed and unanswerable objections which they contain to some of the favorite opinions of his predecessor, Dr. Hutcheson.

The probability of this conjecture is confirmed by the obvious and easy transition which connects the theory of sympathy with Butler's train of thinking in his Sermon on Self-Deceit. In order to free the mind from the influence of its artifices, experience gradually teaches us (as Butler has excellently shown) either to recollect the judgments we have formerly passed in similar circumstances on the conduct of others, or to state cases to ourselves, in which we and all our personal concerns are left entirely out of the question. Hence it was not an unnatural inference, on the first aspect of the fact, that our only ideas of right and wrong, with respect to our own conduct, are derived from our sentiments with respect to the conduct of others. This accordingly (as we have already seen) is the distinguishing principle of Mr. Smith's theory.*

I have formerly referred to a note in Butler's fifth sermon, in which he has exposed the futility of Hobbes's definition of pity.† In the same note, it is remarked further by the very acute and profound author, that Hobbes's premises, if admitted to be sound, so far from establishing his favorite doctrine concerning the selfish nature of man, would afford an additional illustration of the provision made in his constitution for the establishment and maintenance of the social union. "If there be really any such thing as the fiction or imagination of danger to ourselves from sight of the miseries of others, which Hobbes speaks of, and which he has absurdly mistaken for the whole of compassion; if there be any thing of this sort common to mankind, distinct from the reflection of reason, it would be a most remarkable instance of what was furthest from his thoughts, namely, of a mutual sympathy between each particular of the species,—a fellow feeling common to mankind. It would not, indeed, be an instance of our substituting others for ourselves, but it would be an example of our substituting ourselves for others." To those who are at all acquainted with Mr. Smith's book, it is unnecessary for me to observe, how very precisely Butler has here touched on the general fact, which is assumed as the basis of the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*.

In various other parts of Butler's writings, there are manifest anticipations of Mr. Smith's ethical speculations. In his Sermon, for example, on Forgiveness of Injuries, he expresses himself thus: "Without knowing particulars, I take upon me to assure all persons who think they have received indignities or injurious treatment, that they may depend upon it, as in a manner certain, that the offence is not so great as they themselves imagine. We are in such a peculiar situation, with respect to injuries done to ourselves, that we can scarce any more see them as they really are, than our eye can see itself. If we could place ourselves at a due distance, (that is, be really unprejudiced,) we should frequently discern *that* to be in reality inadvertence and mistake in our enemy, which we now fancy we see to be malice or scorn. From this proper point of view we should likewise, in all probability, see something of these latter in ourselves, and most certainly a great deal of the former. Thus the

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* See p. 210 of this Volume. † Id. p. 76.

indignity or injury would almost infinitely lessen, and perhaps at last come out to be nothing at all. Self-love is a medium of a peculiar kind; in these cases it magnifies every thing which is amiss in others, at the same time that it lessens every thing amiss in ourselves."

The following passage in Butler's Sermon on Self-Deceit is still more explicit. "It would very much prevent our being misled by this self-partiality, to reduce that practical rule of our Saviour—'*Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, even so do unto them*'—to our judgment or way of thinking. This rule, you see, consists of two parts. One is, to substitute another for yourself when you take a survey of any part of your behaviour, or consider what is proper and fit and reasonable for you to do upon any occasion: The other part is, that you substitute yourself in the room of another; consider yourself as the person affected by such a behaviour, or towards whom such an action is done, and then you would not only see, but likewise feel the reasonableness or unreasonableness of such an action or behaviour."

The same idea is stated with great clearness and conciseness by Hobbes. "There is an easy rule to know upon a sudden, whether the action I be to do be against the law of nature or not. And it is but this, *That a man imagine himself in the place of the party with whom he hath to do, and reciprocally him in his.* Which is no more but changing (as it were) of the scales; for every man's passion weigheth heavy in his own scale, but not in the scale of his neighbour. And this rule is very well known and expressed in the old dictate; '*Quod tibi fieri non vis, alteri ne feceris.*'" *

It is observed by Gibbon, that this golden rule is to be found in a moral treatise of Isocrates, (in *Nicocle*, tom. I. p. 93. Edit. Battie.) "Α πάσχοντες ὑφ' ἑτέρων ἀχθεσθε, ταῦτα τοῖς ἄλλοις μὴ ποιεῖτε.—(*See Gibbon's History of the Decline*, &c. Vol. X. p. 191.)

To this note I beg leave to subjoin the following passage, with which, in my Account of the Life and Writings of Mr. Smith, I have concluded a slight sketch of the work to which the foregoing observations refer.

"Such are the outlines of Mr. Smith's theory of Moral Sentiments, a work which, whatever opinion we may entertain of the justness of its conclusions, must be allowed by all to be a singular effort of invention, ingenuity, and subtilty. For my own part, I must confess, that it does not coincide with my notions concerning the foundation of morals; but I am convinced, at the same time, that it contains a large mixture of important truth; and that, although the author has sometimes been misled by too great a desire of generalizing his principles, he has had the merit of directing the attention of philosophers to a view of human nature, which had formerly, in a great measure, escaped their notice. Of the great proportion of just and sound reasoning, which the theory involves, its striking plausibility is a sufficient proof; for, as the author himself has remarked, no system in morals can well gain our assent, if it does not border, in some respects, upon the truth. 'A system of natural philosophy,' he observes, 'may appear very plausible, and be for a long time generally received in the world, and yet have no foundation in nature; but the author who should assign as the cause of any natural sentiment some principle, which neither had any connexion with it, nor resembled any other principle, which had some such connexion, would appear absurd and ridiculous to the most injudicious and unexperienced reader.' The merit, however, of Mr. Smith's performance does not rest here. No work, undoubtedly, can be mentioned, ancient or modern, which exhibits so complete a view of those facts with respect to our moral perceptions, which it is one great object of this branch of science to refer to their general laws, and upon this account it well deserves the careful study of all whose taste leads them to prosecute similar inquiries. These facts are indeed frequently expressed in a language which involves the author's particular theories. But they are always presented in the most happy and and beautiful lights; and it is easy for an attentive reader, by stripping them of hypothetical terms, to state them to himself with that logical precision, which, in such very difficult disquisitions, can alone conduct us with certainty to the truth.

"It is proper to observe further, that, with the theoretical doctrines of the book, there are every where interwoven with singular taste and address, the purest and most elevated maxims concerning the practical conduct of life; and that it abounds

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* Moral and Political Works of Thomas Hobbes, folio edition, London, 1750, p. 46.

throughout with interesting and instructive delineations of characters and manners. A considerable part of it, too, is employed in collateral inquiries, which, upon every hypothesis that can be formed concerning the foundation of morals, are of equal importance. Of this kind is the speculation formerly mentioned with respect to the influence of fortune on our moral sentiments, and another speculation, no less valuable, with respect to the influence of custom and fashion on the same part of our constitution.*

"The style in which Mr. Smith has conveyed the fundamental principles on which his theory rests, does not seem to me to be so perfectly suited to the subject as that which he employs on most other occasions. In communicating ideas which are extremely abstract and subtile, and about which it is hardly possible to reason correctly, without the scrupulous use of appropriated terms, he sometimes presents to us a choice of words, by no means strictly synonymous, so as to divert the attention from a precise and steady conception of his proposition; and a similar effect is in other instances produced by that diversity of forms which, in the course of his copious and seducing composition, the same truth insensibly assumes. When the subject of his work leads him to address the imagination and the heart, the variety and felicity of his illustrations, the richness and fluency of his eloquence, and the skill with which he wins the attention and commands the passions of his readers, leave him, among our English moralists, without a rival."

Note (D.) page 247.

The object of this note is to give a slight view of some of the most noted hypotheses which have been formed to account for the active powers exhibited in the universe.

First. The first is that of *Materialism*, according to which the phenomena of nature are the result of certain active powers essentially inherent in matter.

Of this doctrine there are very early traces in the history of metaphysical science. The oldest philosophers in Phœnicia and Greece, of whom we have any account, appear to have founded their physical systems on three suppositions. 1. That of a *Vacuum;* 2. That of *Atoms;* and, 3. That of the *Gravity of Atoms.* This doctrine of atoms (according to Posidonius the Stoic, as cited by Strabo and Sextus Empiricus) was more ancient than the times of the Trojan war, having been taught by Moschus, a Phœnician. There is reason to believe, that the more ancient atomists taught † that there were living principles also, which existed before the union of the systems of these elementary corpuscles, and continued to exist after their dissolution; and that they saw the necessity of admitting active as well as passive principles, life as well as mechanism in the system of the universe. In the progress, however, of philosophical speculation among the Greeks, this doctrine came to be simplified, and the hypothesis of active incorporeal substances to be rejected. Democritus in particular, and afterwards Epicurus, attempted to account for the phenomena of nature from matter and motion only, and considered gravity as an essential property of atoms, by which they are perpetually in motion, or making an effort to move, and have done so from eternity.

In modern times this doctrine has appeared in various forms. Even some authors, whom it would be most uncandid and unjust to call materialists, have occasionally expressed themselves in a manner too favorable to it. "Matter, as far as we can discover," says Lord Kames, "is certainly not endued with thought or voluntary motion, and yet that it is endued with a power of motion in certain circumstances, appears to me an extreme clear point. Dropping a stone from a high tower, it falls to the ground without any external impulse, as far as we can observe. Here is an effect produced which every one, who has not studied philosophy, will attribute to a *power* in the stone itself. One would not hesitate to draw this conclusion, should

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* I ought to have added, as of still higher moment, the remarks which occur in different parts of his work on the *Final Causes of some of our Moral Principles*, particularly the general reflections in Part ii. Sect. 2, beginning—"In every part of the universe we observe means adjusted with the nicest artifice to the ends which they are intended to produce," &c.

These reflections, there can be little doubt, (as I have elsewhere observed,) were meant by the author as an indirect refutation of Mr. Hume's *Theory of Utility.*—*See Philosophy of the Human Mind*, Vol. II. p. 501. Third Edition.

† Maclaurin's Account of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophical Discoveries. Second Edition, p. 26 *et seq.* See also Cudworth's *Intellectual System*, Book i. Chap. 1.

the stone move upwards; and yet, setting aside habit and custom, it must be evident that a stone can as little move downwards as upwards without a *vis motrix*. And that this is a just as well as a natural way of thinking, will appear by analogy. When a man is in motion, we readily ascribe the effect produced to a power which he possesses to move his limbs. Why then do philosophers deny to the stone in the act of falling the power of beginning motion, a power which they so readily ascribe to man? If it be objected, that man is a being endued with a power of moving himself, and of moving other things, the plain answer is, that these are facts which we learn no other way than by experience, and we have the same experience for a voucher, that a stone set free in the air will move itself. And if it be further urged, that man is a thinking being, the answer will readily occur, that a power of beginning visible motion is no more connected with a power of thinking, than it is with any other property of matter or spirit. Nay, Mr. Locke holds that matter may be endowed with a power of thinking, and supposing this power superadded to the other properties of matter, it cannot be maintained, that matter would be rendered thereby more or less capable of beginning or continuing visible motion."*

In considering the history of philosophical opinions, there is nothing so amusing and instructive as to examine the natural prejudices from which they have taken their rise, and to account for their diversity by the different points of view from which the same object has been surveyed by different observers. By attending to the state of science when a particular philosopher lived, we are sometimes able to catch the precise point from which his views were taken, and to perceive the object under the same aspect which it presented to him. In this manner we obtain a thread to guide us through the mazes of an apparent labyrinth: We systematize a seeming chaos of incoherent notions, and render the history of error and absurdity a source of important information with respect to the natural progress of the human mind.

I have elsewhere mentioned some circumstances which render it probable that children conceive all objects animated, and that they ascribe the changes which they see take place in them to an internal power similar to what they experience in themselves. The case is the same with *savages*, who conceive the sea, the earth, the sun, moon, and stars, rivers, fountains, and groves to be active and animated beings. It is remarked by Raynal, that, "wherever savages see *motion* which they cannot account for, *there* they suppose a soul; and that when any piece of mechanism (such as a watch) is presented to them, for the first time, in a moving state, they are apt to suppose it to be *an animal*." Such, then, seems to be the natural and most obvious conclusions of the mind unenlightened by experience and reflection.

The first efforts of philosophical inquiry could not fail to expose the absurdity of these ideas; and in proportion as physical causes came to be discovered, and the mutual connexions and dependencies of phenomena to be ascertained, matter would be gradually stripped of life and intelligence; a suspicion would arise, that connexions exist where we are unable to trace them, and that the universe is nothing but a vast machine. Even the active powers which put the machine in motion would, in the progress of speculative refinement, be considered as properties essential to matter, and on the same footing with its extension and figure. Thus *mind*, which was at first supposed to animate every thing, comes, in process of time, to be banished from the universe; and even the phenomena of thought and volition, of which we are conscious, to be ascribed to a certain combination of matter and motion.

The language of the Newtonian philosophy, with respect to some of the qualities of matter, is somewhat apt to encourage in superficial thinkers prejudices which lead to materialism. Thus the words *attraction* and *gravitation* seem to express active powers essential to, and inherent in matter, and they have accordingly been severely censured by some of Sir Isaac's adversaries as involving that absurd and dangerous supposition. But whatever objections may be made to the language, it must not be forgotten that Sir Isaac himself employed these words merely to express a fact, and that he was at pains to guard his readers against that very misapprehension of his meaning, which has been so often imputed to his philosophy. "Voces autem attractionis, impulsûs, vel propensionis cujuscunque in centrum, indifferenter et pro se mutuo promiscue usurpo; has vires non physicè sed mathematicè tantum considerando. Unde caveat lector, ne per hujusmodi voces cogitet me speciem vel modum actionis causamve aut rationem physicam alicubi definire, vel centris (quæ sunt

* Essay on the Laws of Motion, published in the Essays Physical and Literary of the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh.

puncta mathematica) vires veré et physicé tribuere; si forte centra trahere, aut vires centrorum esse, dixero." *

The scheme of materialism has been so accurately examined, and so fully refuted in a variety of excellent publications, (particularly in Dr. Clarke's book on the Existence and Attributes of God,) that a review of the controversy to which it has given rise would be superfluous and tedious, even if I had it in my power to enter upon the discussion without encroaching on more interesting speculations. The following very slight hints will, I hope, be sufficient for my purpose.

That a commencement of motion in a body formerly at rest implies the agency of mind, is a proposition involved in the only notions of body and mind that we are capable of forming: Or rather, it is a proposition, the truth of which is known to us in the very same manner in which we know that body and mind exist. As sensation implies a sentient being, and thought a thinking being, so a commencement of motion implies a moving *power*, or, in other words, an *agent*. Our conclusions in these different instances are not the result of experience, but are perceptions of the understanding (or in other words, judgments) necessarily accompanying our apprehension of the facts. In order to be satisfied of this, it is only necessary to consider, that wherever experience informs us of a connexion between two things, both of them must have been distinct and separate objects of our knowledge, so that the two may have been compared together, and their connexion remarked. To suppose, therefore, that it is from experience we learn that sensation, thought, and a power of beginning motion are attributes of mind, is to take for granted that we have some knowledge of mind distinct from what we have of its attributes; whereas, in point of fact, (as I had formerly occasion to show,) Mind is not a direct object of our knowledge, and our only notion of it is a relative notion suggested by its operations of which we are conscious. Mind, we say, is *that* which feels, which thinks, which has the power of beginning motion; and therefore, the proposition, that sensation, thought, and the power of beginning motion, *are* attributes of mind, is not a fact resting on experience, but a truth involved in the only notion of mind we possess.

It has indeed been asserted by some philosophers, that it is from experience alone we know that a power of beginning motion is an attribute of mind; and, of consequence, that the same power *may* belong to matter for any thing we can prove to the contrary. Thus, Lord Kames, in a passage already quoted from him, has observed, that "a power of beginning visible motion is no more connected with a power of thinking, than it is with any other property of matter or spirit." And hence he concludes, that "it is experience alone, and not any consideration *a priori*, that can determine whether the power of beginning motion belongs either to matter or to mind. That *mind* has the power of beginning motion we know from our own consciousness: And have we not the very same evidence of our experience, when we see a stone fall downwards, that a power of beginning motion belongs to the stone?"

To the greater part of this reasoning a sufficient answer may be collected from what has been already advanced; but there is one remark made by Lord Kames, which requires a little further consideration: "that a power of beginning visible motion is no more connected with a power of thinking, than it is with any other property of matter or spirit." In favor of this observation it must, I think, be granted, that the power of thinking does not imply a power of beginning motion; for we can easily conceive beings possessed of the former, without any share of the latter. But the converse of the proposition is not equally clear, that a power of beginning motion does not imply a power of thinking. On the contrary, it seems evident, that it does not imply it, for without thought, how could the direction or the velocity of the motion be determined? A commencement of motion, therefore, it would appear, not only implies an agent, but an agent possessed of the power of thinking.

This conclusion will be strongly confirmed by attending to the motions arising from gravity; motions which are regulated both in their direction and quantity by circumstances altogether external to the moving body. A stone, for example, dropped in the air falls downwards in the direction of a line tending nearly to the earth's centre, and the result is the same, in whatever quarter of the globe the experiment is made; so that the *direction* of the stone's motion varies in an infinite number of ways, according to external circumstances. If the stone be carried to different heights above the earth's surface, the accelerating force of its gravity to the earth varies with its distance to the earth's centre, according to a general rule;—decreas-

* Definition VIII. at the beginning of Newton's Principia.

ing, *viz.* in the same proportion in which the square of the distance increases. The gravity, besides, of one body to another increases both in proportion to its own quantity of matter, and to the quantity of matter in the body to which it gravitates. How is it possible to suppose that all this arises from an inherent and essential activity in matter, unless we likewise suppose that every body is not only essentially conscious of the quantity of matter it contains, but is essentially capable of perceiving the quantities of matter in other bodies, together with their situations and distances? It was not, therefore, without reason that Hobbes, after having ascribed to matter a power of self-motion, supposed that it was also endued with *an obscure sense and perception;* and that it differed only from animated beings in wanting the faculty of memory and organs of sense and motion as perfect as theirs. The doctrine, indeed, is too absurd to require a serious examination; but it is evidently a necessary consequence of the scheme of materialism, and it has accordingly been adopted by various other writers, who had a leaning, either avowed or secret, to the same principles.

2. It has been supposed, that the phenomena of nature result from certain active powers communicated to matter at its first formation.

Thus, Mr. Derham says, "it hath pleased the Author of all Things to inspirit the particles of matter with a certain active power called gravity;" and in another passage, "this attractive or gravitating power I take to be congenial to matter, and imprinted on all the matter of the universe by the Creator's *fiat* at the creation."

Of this doctrine of Derham's it seems to be a sufficient refutation to observe, that if matter be at all inactive it must be essentially inactive, and cannot possibly be rendered otherwise, any more than it could continue to be matter after its extension and figure were destroyed.

It is indeed possible to conceive, as some have actually done, a mind connected with every particle of matter,—a supposition which, however unsupported by proof, involves no absurdity nor contradiction. But this is not Derham's supposition; for he plainly understood that the active power of gravity was communicated to the matter itself. His supposition, therefore, is perfectly analogous to Locke's doctrine about the possibility of superadding to the other qualities of matter *a power of thinking*. Indeed, Derham's hypothesis needs that of Locke to make it complete; for how could two bodies adjust their gravitating forces towards each other without a consciousness of their mutual distance?

3. Somewhat akin to this supposition is that which is implied in the language of those philosophers, who ascribe the phenomena of nature to certain *general laws* established by the Deity.

With respect to this language I have elsewhere had occasion to observe, that it is entirely metaphorical, and that although it may be convenient from its conciseness, it suggests to the fancy an analogy which is extremely apt to mislead.

As the order of society results from the general rules prescribed by the legislator, so the order of the universe is conceived to result from certain laws established by the Deity. Thus it is customary to say, that the fall of heavy bodies towards the earth's surface, the ebbing and flowing of the sea, the motions of the planets in their orbits, are consequences of the *law* of gravitation. In one sense this is abundantly accurate, but it must not be too literally understood. In those political associations from which the metaphor is borrowed, the laws are addressed to rational and voluntary agents, who are able to comprehend their meaning, and regulate their conduct accordingly. But in the phenomena exhibited by the material world, the order we see not only implies *intelligence* in its first conception, but *power* to account for its continued existence; or, in other words, it is the same being who enacts and executes the law. If the word *law*, therefore, be in such instances literally understood, it must mean an uniform mode of acting prescribed to the Deity by himself; and it has accordingly been explained in this sense by the best writers on natural religion, particularly by Dr. Clarke in a passage formerly quoted.

4. A fourth supposition is that of Dr. Cudworth, who ascribes the phenomena of the material world to what he calls *a plastic or formative nature*, or (according to to his own definition of it) to "a vital and spiritual but unintelligent and necessary agent, created by the Deity for the execution of his purposes." The same observations that were made upon the *second* of the foregoing hypotheses are applicable to this doctrine, which, notwithstanding the high merits of its author, is perhaps the most unphilosophical of any mentioned in this enumeration. It differs, indeed, from that to which I have assigned the *second* place in my arrangement only in this, that it presents the same idea under a form somewhat more mysterious, attempting

to conceal its native absurdity under a veil of scholastic words more likely to impose on an unlearned ear.

5. Dissatisfied with all these doctrines, a late author of genius and learning has made an attempt to revive the *ancient theory of mind;* the only effectual bulwark, according to him, against the materialism and atheism of modern times.

The general principle of this theory is, that every motion is not only produced, but continued by *mind*. *Mind*, we are told, is that which moves—body is that which is moved. Every particle of matter, therefore, Lord Monboddo supposes to be animated by different minds. Thus, there is one mind which he calls the elemental mind, which is the source of the cohesion of bodies. There is another mind, which is the cause of their gravitation, and so on in other instances. Even in the case of motion produced by impulse, he holds that the impulse is only the *occasion* of the motion. The motion is *continued* in consequence of the agency of mind excited by the impulse; for a continued motion implies a continued activity. The motions of the planets round the sun are not the result of a constant tangential and a constant centripetal tendency, (according to the ideas of Newton and his followers,) but are carried on by minds which animate the planets in a way analogous to that in which the motions of animals are produced. The only difference is this, that he supposes the minds which animate the planets to be void of intelligence, and, as he expresses it, to be merely principles of motion.

Before I proceed to make any observations on this doctrine, it may be amusing to turn our attention to the different fancies which have been entertained on the subject by those philosophers who have had a leaning to similar theories. A short account of some of them (sufficiently accurate for our present purpose) is contained in the following passage of *Maupertuis*.

"Les Egyptiens en firent des dieux," the author is speaking of the stars, "et parmi les Grecs les Stoïciens leur attribuèrent des âmes divines. Anaxagoras fut condamné comme un impie pour avoir nié l'âme du soleil. Cleanthe et Platon furent sur cela plus orthodoxes. Philon donne aux astres, non seulement des âmes, mais des âmes très pures. Origines étoit dans la même opinion: il a cru que les âmes de ces corps ne leur avoient pas toujours appartenu, et qu'elles viendroient un jour à en être séparées.

"Avicenne a donné aux astres une âme intellectuelle et sensitive. Simplicius les croit douées de la vue, de l'ouie, et du tact. Tycho et Kepler admettent des âmes dans les étoiles et dans les planètes. Baranzanus, religieux Barnabite, astronome et théologien, leur attribue une certaine âme moyenne entre l'intellectuelle et la brute. A la vérité, St. Thomas, qui dans différens endroits de ses ouvrages, leur avoit accordé assez libéralement des âmes intellectuelles, semble dans son 7me chapitre *Contra Gentes* s'être rétracté, et ne vouloir plus leur donner que des âmes sensitives." *

I shall add to this detail a few detached passages from the classical writers, to show how very generally these ideas have prevailed.

"Ea quoque (sidera) rectissime," says Balbus the Stoic in Cicero, "et animantia esse, et sentire atque intelligere dicantur."—(*De Nat. Deor.* L. ii. xv.)

"Probabile est, præstantem intelligentiam in sideribus esse."—(Id. ibid. xvi.)

"Immissæque feræ sylvis, et sidera cœlo."—(*Virg.* Georg. ii. v. 342.)

> "Neu regio foret ulla suis animantibus orba,
> Astra tenent cœleste solum formæque Deorum;
> Terra feras cepit."
>
> (*Ovid.* Met. i. v. 75.)

Statius represents *Aurora* as driving the stars with a whip.

> "Tempus erat, junctos cum jam soror ignea Phœbi
> Sentit equos, penitusque cavam sub luce paratâ
> Oceani mugire domum: seseque vagantem
> Colligit; et moto leviter fugat astra flagello."
>
> (*Theb.* viii. v. 274.†)

Maupertuis himself, in his *Système de la Nature*,‡ supposes every elementary particle of matter to be endued not only with a power of motion, but with intelli-

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* Œuvres de Maupertuis, Vol. II. p. 209. † See Spence's Polymetis, p. 179.

‡ It may be necessary to caution some of my readers against confounding the *Système de la Nature* of Maupertuis with a book published a few years after with the same title, under the name of Mirabaud, but now universally understood to have been the work of Baron d'Holbach. See second part of the first Dissertation prefixed to the Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica. [Vol. VI. p. 344, of this edition.]

gence—" Quelque principe d'intelligence, semblable à ce que nous appellons désir, aversion, mémoire."—This performance of Maupertuis was published first in Latin, under the title of a "Thesis defended at Erlangen in Germany, by Dr. Baumann." It excited a good deal of attention and opposition at Paris, and among its other opposers was the celebrated *M. Diderot*. Maupertuis replied to his objections in form; and it is from this answer alone that I know any thing of Diderot's system. From Maupertuis's account it appears that Diderot objected to the *Système de la Nature* as favoring materialism, and proposed to substitute in place of it another theory, according to which the elementary particles of matter were supposed to want intelligence, but to be endued with a power of sensation,—" Une sensation semblable à *un toucher obtus et sourd*." One can hardly avoid asking, with Maupertuis—" Est-ce sérieusement que M. Diderot propose cette différence?" At any rate, it is surely an object of some curiosity to trace the wanderings of Diderot's imagination in this metaphysical region, till it appears to have finally settled in an undisguised system of materialism and atheism. After all, some may perhaps think that the question of Maupertuis may not unreasonably be repeated,—" Est-ce sérieusement que M. Diderot propose ce système?

In the extract from Maupertuis formerly quoted, the name of Kepler is mentioned among those who have given countenance to the supposition of the stars being animated. One very remarkable passage to this purpose occurs in Kepler's commentaries on the motions of the planet Mars, and it agrees in many respects with the doctrine maintained by the learned author of *Ancient Metaphysics*. The two theories, however, differ in this, that Kepler supposes the minds which animate the planets to be possessed of intelligence, and of powers of perception far superior to ours. " Nego," says he, in one passage, " ullum motum perennem *non rectum* a Deo conditum esse præsidio mentali destitutum." And again, " Hujus *motoris* manifestum est duo fore munia; alterum ut facultate polleat transvectandi corporis; alterum ut scientiâ præditus sit inveniendi circularem limitem per illam puram auram ætheriam nullis hujusmodi regionibus distinctam." (p. 8.) In another part of the same work he seriously gives it as his opinion, that the minds of the planets must have a power of making observations on the sun's apparent diameter, that they may thereby be enabled to regulate their motions so as to describe areas proportional to the times. " Credibile est itaque, si quâ facultate præditi sint *motores* illi observandæ hujus diametri, eam tanto esse argutiorem quam sunt oculi nostri, quanto opus ejus et perennis motio nostris turbulentis et confusis negotiis est constantior.

" An ergo binos singulis planetis tribues oculos, Keplere? Nequaquam. Neque est necesse. Neque enim, ut moveri possint, pedes ipsis atque alæ sunt tribuendæ."

Of these two theories, that of Kepler seems to be the more philosophical; for it is plainly an attempt to bring the phenomena of moving bodies under the class of animal life. When we discover that a motion is produced by an animal, we inquire no further; for we know from experience, that animals have a power of beginning motion; and if it could have been made appear that the phenomena of the planets were analogous to the motions of living and intelligent beings, the discovery might justly have been regarded as a step gained in the study of nature. The minds, which, according to the other theory, are said to animate the planets, are analogous to nothing of which we have any experience; nor in this instance does the word *mind* convey to us any more information than the words *attraction* and *gravitation*. They are all names for the unknown cause of a known effect.

What Maupertuis has observed with respect to the hypothesis of a *plastic nature*, is equally applicable to that of " principles of motion void of intelligence."—" Les uns ont imaginés des natures plastiques, qui sans intelligence et sans matière exécutent dans l'univers tout ce que la matière et l'intelligence pourroient exécuter."—" L'expérience nous apprend, quoique nous ne puissions savoir comment la chose l'exécute, que des êtres dans lesquels se trouvent l'intelligence et la matière peuvent agir sur le corps: Mais l'expérience ne nous apprend point et l'on ne concevra jamais, comment des substances immatérielles, sans le concours immédiat de l'Etre tout puissant, le pourroient faire. La chose sera encore plus incompréhensible si l'on entend que ces substances immatérielles soient de plus privées d'intelligence. Car alors non seulement nous n'avons plus d'idée qui puisse nous servir à expliquer leurs opérations, mais nous n'avons plus même d'idée qui puisse nous faire concevoir leur existence." *

* Système de la Nature, § 8.

To these observations on this theory of mind I have only to add, that in its tendency it agrees perfectly with the scheme of *materialism*. This is undoubtedly not the idea of *some* of its patrons, who have flattered themselves with the belief, that if it were generally adopted, it would banish materialism and atheism from philosophy.* Nay, one of them has ventured to assert, that whoever calls it in question, must, whether he knows it or not, be an atheist. "Every man," says the author of *Ancient Metaphysics*, "must of necessity be an atheist, who holds that matter can of itself either begin or continue motion." The justness of this conclusion I cannot admit, even with respect to those who hold the absurd opinion, that matter can of itself *begin* motion; for although the scheme of materialism destroys those arguments for the existence of a Deity which are founded on the beginning of motion, it leaves all those in full force which are founded on the appearances of design in in the universe. Admitting, however, that the inference is just, the charge may be fairly retorted on those who support the theory of mind. The materialists hold that matter has a power of self-motion. The other philosophers contend that every particle of matter has a mind or principle of motion united with it. According to both systems, there is no necessity for having recourse to the Deity for the beginning of motion; for, according to both of them, there is a power of self-motion in every particle of matter, and the only difference is, that the one system supposes the power to belong to the particle itself, the other supposes that it belongs to a distinct principle, with which it is inseparably united.

As I do not know that this theory of mind has gained many proselytes in modern times, I shall not enter into a more particular examination of it, but shall content myself with remarking the illustration it affords of the influence of that principle of our nature, which has led men in all ages to ascribe the changes that take place in the state of the universe to the operation of powers superior to mere matter.

6. The last supposition we shall take notice of upon this subject, is that of the philosophers who conceive that the universe is a machine formed and put in motion by the Deity; and that the multiplicity of effects that take place, may perhaps have all proceeded from one single act of his power. In this view of the mechanism of the universe, Descartes and Leibnitz agreed, notwithstanding the wide diversity of their systems in other respects.

Of these two philosophers, the former not only affirmed in general terms that the universe is a great machine, of which all the different parts are mechanically connected, but attempted to explain in particular in what manner it might have assumed its present form, and may for ever be preserved by mechanical principles. The whole of space he supposed to be replenished with an ether or dense fluid, and all

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* I would not have dwelt so long on this subject, had not Lord Monboddo himself communicated to me some letters which passed between him and the late Bishop Horsley, in which the learned Editor and Commentator of Newton, after bestowing the highest praise on his Lordship's attempt to revive the *Ancient Theory of Mind*, adds, that if it should draw the attention it deserved, "it would drive atheists and materialists into holes and corners." This correspondence I have no doubt still exists, and I trust it will sooner or later be communicated to the public. The only fragment of it which Lord Monboddo has published is to be found in the second volume of his *Ancient Metaphysics*, pp. 357, 358, where Dr. Horsley has fairly acknowledged that "Sir Isaac Newton's *First Law of Motion* cannot be defended upon the principles of sound philosophy."—"I believe, with the author of *Ancient Metaphysics*, that some active principle is necessary for the continuance, as well as for the beginning of motion. I know that many Newtonians will not allow this. I believe they are misled, as I myself have formerly been misled, by the expression, *a state of motion*. Motion is a change; a continuation of motion is a further change; a further change is a repeated effect; a repeated effect requires a repeating cause. State implies the contrary of change; and motion being change, *a state of motion* is a contradiction in terms."

At an earlier period of Dr. Horsley's life he seems to have thought differently. His first mathematical publication, if I recollect right, was a pamphlet entitled. *The Power of God deduced from the computable instantaneous productions of it in the Solar System*. 1767.—At this time, so far from devolving with Lord Monboddo the task of maintaining the planetary motions upon a sort of immaterial machinery, he agreed with Dr. Clarke in resolving it into the constant and incessant agency of the Deity; and even went so far as to attempt a calculation of the force exerted by *him* every instant to preserve the solar system in order.

the phenomena we see to be the effects of impulsion. Thus he accounts for the gravity of terrestrial bodies from the centrifugal force of the ether revolving round the earth, which he imagined must impel bodies downwards, that have not so great a centrifugal force, much in the same manner as a fluid impels a body upwards that is immersed in it, and has a less specific gravity than it. He pretended to explain the phenomena of the magnet, and to account for every thing in nature from the same principles.

The great argument which Descartes alleged for his system was, that the same quantity of motion is always preserved in the universe, and passes from one portion of matter to another without undergoing any change in the whole; and this he thought was sufficiently proved by the constancy and immutability of the Divine Nature. But with those who attend to facts, this metaphysical reasoning will have little weight: And fortunately the facts which disprove it are such as are familiar to every person acquainted with the first elements of physics. In the composition of motion, absolute motion, it is manifest, is always diminished, as in the resolution of motion it is increased. Absolute motion, too, is diminished in many cases, in the collisions of bodies that have an imperfect elasticity, and in some cases it is increased in the collisions of elastic bodies. To obviate these objections, Leibnitz (who, as I already said, agreed with Descartes in considering the universe as a machine) was led to distinguish between the quantity of motion of bodies and the force of bodies. The former, he owns, is perpetually varying; but the latter, he maintains, remains invariably the same. This new modification, however, of the principle, does not render it the more consistent with the phenomena; even although, with Leibnitz, we should measure the force of bodies (not by their simple velocities, but) by the squares of their velocities. If all bodies indeed were perfectly elastic, the principle would possess some plausibility; but it is well known, that no such body has hitherto been discovered. When any two bodies meet with equal motions they rebound with less motions, and force is lost in the collision. If the bodies are soft, the force of both is destroyed. It was to reconcile these facts with his general principle that Leibnitz had recourse to his hypothesis of a perfectly elastic fluid, which, according to him, in such cases as I now mentioned, receives and retains the forces of the impinging bodies. But, not to urge that this is a mere hypothesis, invented to answer a particular purpose, how shall the perfect elasticity of the supposed fluid be explained on the known principles of mechanism? And till this is done, the Leibnitzian theory of the mechanism of the universe must be allowed to be incomplete.

Beside, however, these objections, which apply particularly to the mechanical explanations of the universe given by Descartes and Leibnitz, there is one which seems to be conclusive, not only against *them*, but against all other attempts of the same kind that can be made. This objection is founded on the vague and indistinct idea of mechanism on which all such attempts proceed. This word properly expresses a combination of *natural powers* to produce a certain effect. When such a combination is successful, a machine once set a going will sometimes continue to perform its office for a considerable time without requiring the interposition of the artist. And hence we are led to conclude, that the case may perhaps be similar with repect to the universe, when once put into motion by the Deity. But the falseness of the analogy appears from this, that the moving force in every machine is some *natural power*, such as gravity or elasticity; and therefore the very idea of mechanism presupposes the existence of those active powers of which it is the professed object of a mechanical theory of the universe to give an explanation.

Note (E.) page 251.

The following note (which was kindly transmitted to me by Sir James Mackintosh) contains the opinion of Dr. Parr upon the much controverted point, whether Aristotle was really the author of the Treatise *De Mundo*, commonly printed as part of his works. It was, alas! the last communication I had with that truly learned and excellent person.

"I told Sir James Mackintosh and Mr. Dugald Stewart that the book *De Mundo* was not written by Aristotle; and to such illustrious men I ought to state my reasons for an opinion so confidently expressed. In my Aristotle, I have marked other works which I hold to be spurious. I stated before, and I now state again, as the ground of my opinion, the total want of resemblance to the style of Aristotle. My sagacious friends will promptly assent when I tell them, that in the third chapter of the *Liber de Mundo*, the writer mentions the islands of Great Britain, quite unknown to the Greeks in Aristotle's time.

Ἐν τῷ Ὠκεανῷ νῆσοι μέγισταί τε συγχάνουσιν οὖσαι δύο, Βρεταννικαὶ λεγόμεναι, Ἄλβιον καὶ Ἰέρνη, τῶν προϊστορημένων μείζους, κ. τ. λ.—*Aristoteles*, p. 604, *De Mundo*, Cap. III.

"I suppose Mr. Stewart and Sir James to have access to *Fabricii Bibliotheca Græca* by Harles. Now, in Vol. III. pp. 232 and 233, there is much learned matter upon this work. The title is wrong, for it should be, as we learn from Stobæus, a letter περὶ τοῦ παντός. Towards the close of the addition by Harles and his friends, we have these words:

"'M. Goerenz, in disp. de libri περὶ κόσμου, qui inter Aristotelis scripta reperitur, auctore, Wittebergæ m. Aprili 1792, 4. illam sententiam, quæ Aristotelem auctorem respuit, probabiliorem animadvertens, primum examinat dissentientium rationes, tum argumenta alia, ab aliis omissa, a Kappio tamen partim adlata et exposita, cogit, et contra Petitum ac Battesium tela potissimum dirigit. Denique suspicatur, auctorem Aristotelis nomen libro suo quæstûs causâ supposuisse, qui eum regi Ptolemæo Philadelpho pro Aristotelis libro venderet. Quidquid est, satis evictum esse puto a Kappio et Goerenzio, superiorum V. D. vestigia prementibus, Aristotelem non fuisse libelli parentem.'—J. G.

"You will find that Harles thinks as I do. In page 347, you will find among the editions of parts of Aristotle, some account of this book *De Mundo*. Vulcanius says, the arguments of those who deny the book to be Aristotle's are *plumbea*. 'Vulcanius mire laudat' the version of Apuleius. Now, hear what is said, page 232, on this work of Apuleius, and is said well.

"'Quum Apuleius libri sui *De Mundo* initio non dicat, se versionem libri Græci scribere, sed se satis clare conditorem illius libri profiteatur, hinc credo, Apuleium verum esse illius libri auctorem; Græcum vero textum esse versionem.' HEUMANN.

"I agree with Heumannus, for the matter and the manner suits well the known age of Apuleius. Let me advert to another subject. Mr. Stewart has written wisely and virtuously upon atheism, direct or indirect. I agree with him about Spinosa, and I almost agree with him about Hobbes. But I do earnestly intreat Sir James and Mr. Stewart to bestow great attention to what is said, pp. 377 and 378, of Vol. III. of Fabricius. The observations and cautions of Harles should be attended to. I am sure that Sir James and Mr. Stewart will thank me for pointing out these two pages. * * * *

"*Dec.* 10, 1821. S. PARR."

Note (F.) page 403.

In a note which the reader will find in pp. 402, 403, I have quoted a very remarkable passage from D'Alembert's Eloge on M. de Sacy. I am now to quote another equally striking from the preface prefixed by the same author to his Academical *Eloges*. "*Celui qui se marie*, dit Bacon, *donne des ôtages à la fortune*. L'homme de lettres qui tient ou qui aspire à l'Académie donne des ôtages à la décence. * * * * S'il y avoit eu une académie à Rome et qu'elle y eut été florissante et honorée, Horace eût été flatté d'y être assis à côté du sage Virgile son ami: que lui en eût-il coûté pour y parvenir? d'effacer de ses vers quelques obscénités qui les déparent; le poëte n'auroit rien perdu, et le citoyen auroit fait son devoir. Par la même raison, Lucrèce, jaloux de l'honneur d'appeler Cicéron son confrère, n'eût conservé de son poëme que les morceaux sublimes où il est si grand peintre, et n'auroit supprimé que ceux où il donne, en vers prosaïques, des leçons *d'Athéisme*, c'est-à-dire où il fait des efforts, aussi coupables que foibles, *pour ôter un frein à la méchanceté puissante, et une consolation à la vertu malheureuse*." *

These two quotations from D'Alembert (neither of which I recollect to have seen referred to in any English publication) present, it must be owned, a strong contrast to some passages in his correspondence with Voltaire and the King of Prussia, which have been industriously brought forward in some periodical works of this country. Which of these inconsistent passages express the author's real sentiments, I shall not presume to decide; but I thought it an act of justice to call the attention of my readers to both of them. Indeed, in cases of this sort, the only question with the reader ought to be, on what occasions an author spoke the truth,—*not when* he expressed his own opinion. "Qui autem requirunt," says Cicero, with his usual good sense and philosophical liberality, "quid quâque de re ipsi sentiamus, curiosiùs id faciunt quam necesse est. Non enim tam auctores in disputando quam rationis momenta

* The words printed in Italics in this passage are distinguished in the same way in the original.

quærenda sunt. Quin etiam obest plerumque iis, qui discere volunt, auctoritas eorum, qui se docere profitentur. Desinunt enim suum judicium adhibere: id habent ratum, quod ab eo, quem probant, judicatum vident." *

Note (B.) page 598.

The following passage in one of Gray's letters has a sufficient connexion with the foregoing appendix, to justify me in giving it a place here. Indeed, were the connexion much slighter and less obvious than it is, little apology would be necessary for relieving the attention of the reader, by quoting any thing relating to so important a subject from such a pen.

"I am as sorry as you seem to be, that our acquaintance harped so much on the subject of materialism when I saw him with you in town, because it was plain to which side of the long debated question he inclined. That we are, indeed, mechanical and dependent beings, I need no other proof than my own feelings; and from the same feelings I learn with equal conviction, that we are not *merely* such. That there is a power within which struggles against the force and bias of that mechanism, commands its motion, and by frequent practice reduces it to that ready obedience we call *habit;* and all this in conformity to a preconceived opinion (no matter whether right or wrong) to that least material of all agents, a thought. I have known many in his case, who, while they thought they were conquering an old prejudice, did not perceive they were under the influence of one far more dangerous, —one that furnishes us with a ready apology for all our worst actions, and opens to us a full license for doing whatever we please; and yet these very people were not at all the more indulgent to other men (as they naturally should have been); their indignation to (at?) such as offended them, their desire of revenge on any body that hurt them, was nothing mitigated. In short, they wished to be persuaded of that opinion for the sake of its convenience, but were not so in their hearts; and they would have been glad (as they ought in common prudence) that nobody else should think the same, for fear of the mischief that might ensue to themselves. His French author I never saw, but have read fifty in the same strain, and shall read no more. I can be wretched enough without them." †

I shall avail myself of this note to remark, that on the subject of free will, though Locke has thrown out many important observations, he is on the whole more indistinct, undecided, and inconsistent, than might have been expected from his powerful mind, when directed to so important a question. This was probably owing to his own strong feelings in favor of man's moral liberty, combined with the deep impression left on his philosophical creed by the writings of Hobbes, and by the habits of intimacy and friendship in which he lived with the acutest and ablest of all Necessitarians, Anthony Collins. That Locke conceived himself to be an advocate for free will appears indisputably from many expressions in his chapter *on Power;* and yet in that very chapter he has made various concessions to his adversaries, in which he seems to yield all that was contended for by Hobbes and Collins; and accordingly he is ranked, with some appearance of truth, by Priestley with those, who, while they opposed verbally the scheme of necessity, have adopted it substantially without being aware of their mistake.

Note (C.) page 601.

That in this part of the world the sexes every where approach to equality has been long observed. Major Graunt, (who assisted Sir William Petty in his inquiries relative to Political Arithmetic,) from an examination both of the London and country bills, states 14 males to 13 females; from whence he infers, that "the Christian religion, prohibiting polygamy, is more agreeable to the law of nature than Mahometanism and others that allow of it."

"This proportion of 14 to 13," says Dr. Derham, "I imagine is nearly just. In the 100 years of my own parish register, although the burials of males and females were nearly equal, (being 636 males, and 623 females in all that time,) yet there were baptized 709 males, and but 675 females; which numbers are in the proportion of 13.7 to 13." ‡

Of late years this subject has been examined with far greater accuracy than had been attempted before, by Mr. Sussmilch in Germany, by Mr. Wargentin in Sweden,

* De Naturâ Deorum, Lib. I. v.

† Gray's Works, by Mason, Letter xxxi. (to Mr. Stonehewer.)

‡ Physico-Theology, pp. 175, 176. See on this subject a French work of high authority, entitled *Métrologie*, p. 485. Also, Moheau, *Recherches sur la Population*.

and by Dr. Price in England. From their combined observations it seems to be established beyond a doubt, *First*, that the *number of males and of females born invariably approach to equality. Secondly*, that the excess is in favor of the males. *Thirdly*, that this excess is partly counterbalanced by their great mortality.

With respect to other parts of the globe, our information is much less correct; and here accordingly speculative men have found themselves more at liberty to indulge their ingenuity and fancy. "In Japan," says Montesquieu, upon the authority of Kæmpfer, "there are born rather more girls than boys; and at Bantam the former exceed the latter in the proportion of ten to one." Hence he seems disposed to infer, that the law which permits polygamy is physically conformable to the inhabitants of such countries; a conclusion which some other authors have apprehended to be further confirmed by the prematurity and rapid decay of female beauty in some regions of the East.

The same argument has been much and very confidently insisted on by Mr. Bruce in his *Travels to Abyssinia*, where he attempts to confirm it by some facts which fell under his own personal knowledge. To his very strong statements may be opposed the testimony of other travellers not less entitled to credit. The assertion of Montesquieu, that at Bantam the number of females exceeds that of males in the proportion of ten to one, is directly contradicted by Mr. Marsden in his very able and interesting account of Sumatra, where he resided a considerable number of years. "I can take upon me to assert," says he, "that the proportion of the sexes throughout Sumatra does not differ sensibly from that ascertained in Europe; *nor could I ever learn from the inhabitants of the many eastern islands whom I have conversed with, that they had remarked any disproportion in this respect.*"

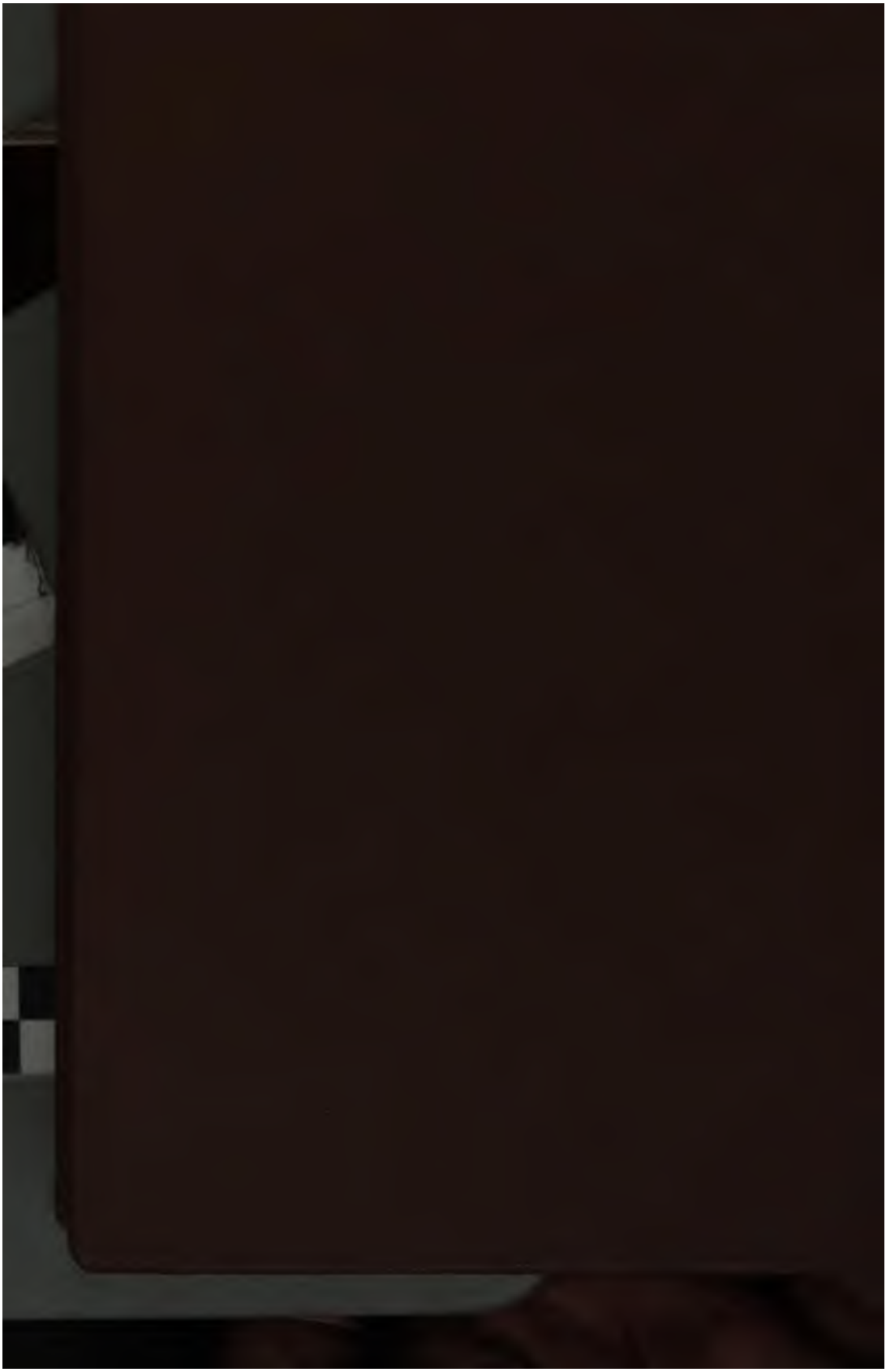
The following passage from a most authentic and judicious traveller is still more full and satisfactory. The author I quote is M. Niebuhr, whose travels through Arabia and other countries in the East have acquired such great and deserved reputation.

"Much has been said in Europe concerning the origin of the practice of polygamy, so generally prevalent throughout the East. Supposing that a plurality of wives is not barely allowed by law, but takes place in fact, some of our philosophers have imagined that in hot countries more women than men are born; but I have already stated, that some nations avail not themselves of the permission given by the Mussulman law for one man to marry several wives. It would be unfair to judge of the manners of a whole people by the fastidious luxury of the great. It is vanity that peoples seraglios, and that chiefly with slaves, most of whom are only slaves to a few favorite women. *The number of female servants in Europe, who are in the same manner condemned in a great measure to celibacy, is equal or superior to that of those who are confined in the harams of the East.*

"It is true, that European clergymen and physicians settled in the East have presumed that rather more girls than boys are born there. I obtained some lists of Christian baptisms in the East; but some of these were filled with inconsistencies; and in the others the number by which the females born exceeded the males was indeed very trifling. I have reason, therefore, to conclude, that *the proportion between the male and the female births is the same here as elsewhere.*" *

I shall conclude this note by once more recalling the attention of the reader to the important fact, that from the latest and most accurate observations made both in the old and new world, Laplace has thought himself authorized to conclude, that this balance between the sexes (with a trifling preponderance in favor of the male) may be regarded as *an universal law with regard to the human race.* In forming this conclusion, Laplace appears to have been much struck with the result of Humboldt's researches in America, where he found that even between the tropics the same proportion of male births to female obtained as was observed at Paris. The sanction thus deliberately given by this illustrious mathematician to the universality of the fact will, I hope, in the opinion of the great majority of my readers, add more weight to the argument in favor of design, than his reasonings quoted in the text furnish against it.

In confirmation of Laplace's conclusion with respect to the universality of this law, I am assured by the best authority, that, from a recent census in our Indian empire, it appears that the very same proportion between the sexes takes place there as in Europe.

* Heron's Translation, Vol. II. p. 218.

END OF VOLUME V.